





# news

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## Prices to fall in free-for-all at the pharmacy

Glenda Cooper

Cheaper branded medicines are on the way after the Office of Fair Trading yesterday took the first move to abolish price controls on over-the-counter drugs.

But pharmacists warned that the OFT's move could herald the death-knell for the small local pharmacy, with as many as one in four facing closure.

John Bridgeman, director-general for the OFT, said yesterday he was taking legal action to end Resale Price Maintenance (RPM) - the practice of manufacturers stipulating the price to be charged to customers - on nearly 2,300 products which include antiseptics, painkillers, indigestion remedies, vitamins, minerals and laxatives. He said its abolition would save the consumer £180m a year.

Pharmacists have argued that removing RPM will put small chemists, who provide a valuable service to the community over and above dispensing medicine, at the mercy of large supermarket chains which will be able to discount more heavily than they can.

The Community Pharmacy Action Group (CPAG) claimed the move could lead to up to a quarter of pharmacies closing, and described Mr Bridgeman's decision as a "massive threat to Britain's health care".

RPM was made unlawful in Britain in the 1960s except for the two areas of books and over-the-counter medicines. The review of the policy began a year

Branded Product	RPM price	Own-label product
Aspirin Extra (24 pack)	£2.22	90p
Examine (10)	£3.39	£1.69
Seven Seas Cod Liver Oil (60)	£3.59	£1.79
Sanatogen high strength Vitamin C 500mg (60)	£3.85	£1.90
Nurofen (12)	£1.39	69p

ago after supermarket chain Asda, which was a key player in ending the book price-fixing agreement, defied RPM by slashing prices on products such as Anadin.

Mr Bridgeman said chemists in general were more secure than they had been in 1970 when the last attempt to overturn RPM on non-prescription medicines had been made. "A higher proportion of chemists' turnover is now from prescriptions: the figure is more than 70 per cent compared with 50 per cent in 1970," he said. The products on which price competition would be possible accounted for only 3-4 per cent of their business. "Many chemists will welcome this move, they will become more competent and efficient," he said.

But David Sharpe, chairman of CPAG condemned the move and said: "RPM is a tried and

tested way of guaranteeing a widespread network of community pharmacies which gives everyone in the UK access to professional advice and a wide range of medicines. Is it worth sacrificing such an essential service for a saving of 6 pence per person per week at the very most? We know the UK public don't think so."

Lahour consumer affairs spokesman Nigel Griffiths said he was "very concerned" by the announcement. "The OFT is playing into the hands of the big retailers."

But Laura Simons, senior public affairs officer for the Consumers' Association, said: "We are delighted at this important first step towards the abolition of RPM which has forced consumers to pay a high price without any improvement in access to pharmacy despite industry claims."



High drama: The rehearsal for *Daphnis and Chloe*, starring Irek Mukhamedov and Miyako Yoshida (above), due to open the Covent Garden Royal Ballet season last night, was abandoned when scenery crashed. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

## significant shorts

### Thousands to march for more school money

Thousands of teachers, school governors and supporters are expected to march through London today to press Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to increase spending on education.

The march comes as government spending decisions are being finalised ahead of the Budget. It has been organised by the National Union of Teachers, which says education authorities are struggling this year against a £752m shortfall - the difference between what they asked for from the Government and what they received.

### Murder police arrest officer

Detectors in Dublin investigating the murder of the journalist Veronica Guerin were last night questioning a garda arrested over suspected links with leading criminals. A sawn-off shotgun was reported to have been found in his house. The Garda said he was being held under the Offences Against the State Act at a Dublin station "in connection with serious crimes". The arrest is thought to have followed surveillance of criminals with links to the main suspect. Since Ms Guerin's shooting in June more than 50 people have been arrested. *Alan Murdoch*

### Woman jailed for contempt will appeal

A woman jailed because she was too scared to give evidence against her alleged attacker is to appeal.

The father of Sarah Holt, 20, said yesterday he was "horrified" when he heard a judge at Chelmsford Crown Court in Essex had sent her to Holloway Prison, north London, for three months, though she is now in an open prison. Mr Holt, a businessman, said she has only just recovered from the scars of the assault allegedly by her former boyfriend, Alex Fryatt.

Women's rights campaigners say Miss Holt and her friend Sophie Bird, jailed for two months, should be freed.

### Lush's Acland found hanged

Chris Acland, above.



drummer with the rock group Lush, has been found dead in an outhouse at his home at Kendal, Cumbria. He had apparently hanged himself. Fellow members of the indie band, which had just finished a tour of the US, were said to be devastated. Police do not consider the death suspicious.

Acland, 30, was thought to have been considering his future with the band, which has had three hit singles in the alternative charts.

A spokesman for Lush's record company, 4AD, said he had left London to visit his parents in Cumbria after the tour. He had been depressed but it was not known why. *Jojo Mayes*

### Tunnel plan for Park Lane

A visionary plan to extend Hyde Park in London by routing Park Lane underground is to be announced next month by a consortium seeking lottery funding for the project. The idea would be to give back the six acres taken from the park in the Sixties when much of Park Lane was turned into an eight-lane dual carriageway. The scheme, costing up to £90m, is being promoted by two engineering firms. *Christian Wolmar*

## Postal staff head for strike despite threat to jobs

Barrie Clement  
 Labour Editor

Despite dire warnings about job losses, most postal workers are voting for fresh industrial action at the Royal Mail, according to both senior managers and union sources.

The fresh round of disruption could cause havoc during the Christmas period and come at a sensitive time for

the Labour Party, with just six months to go before the general election. Management is intensifying its campaign for a "no" vote, but concedes there is discontent among the 130,000-strong workforce, which is intensely loyal to its union. The moderate leadership of the Communication Workers' Union is urging a vote for action, but is likely to call for fresh talks, whatever the outcome of the ballot.

The latest prediction of redundancies comes in a memorandum prepared by the Post Office which argues that strikes could force up to 30,000 employees on to the dole over the next five years, nearly a quarter of the workforce. Ministers have warned that more stoppages would lead to a further suspension of the Post Office's letters monopoly.

The warning about job losses is a

"worst case scenario" contained in a paper drawn up to assess the impact on the service of more stoppages.

The authors of the document say the three-month suspension threatened by the Government would allow serious competitive services to become established. After the dispute, private carriers would almost certainly attempt to persuade ministers to allow them to continue operations, the paper says.

The union ballot result is not due out until the end of the month, but even moderate union officials conceded yesterday that the vote was likely to be in favour of fresh action. Senior managers think that the result will be close - unlike the 68 per cent majority in favour of action in the first ballot - but say that they would not be surprised by another "yes" vote.

## Paramilitaries want peace to continue, says Trimble

David McKittrick  
 Ireland Correspondent

The Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble yesterday emerged from a meeting with imprisoned Protestant paramilitaries saying he believed they wanted the loyalist ceasefire to last.

His meeting with inmates at the Maze prison outside Belfast was something of a departure for a mainstream Unionist leader, since most have preferred to keep their distance from the violent loyalists.

The encounter was described as constructive and fruitful by a loyalist spokesman. The mood of loyalist prisoners appears to have mellowed considerably in a very short time, since less than three weeks ago some of them announced they were withdrawing their support for the peace process.

Among those Mr Trimble met were noted loyalist terrorists Johnny Adair, who once had charge of the Ulster Defence Association's most violent section, and Michael Stone, who shot three Catholics dead at a republican funeral in 1988.

Mr Trimble said: "I have left the meeting feeling very strong-



David Trimble visited loyalists in the Maze while John Hume negotiated an end to the Londonderry stand-off

ly that the prisoners here wish to see the ceasefire sustained and wish to see positive developments on the political front. I very much hope that the ceasefire will be sustained, but there is of course the ever-present worry that further acts of provocation by republicans could destabilise the situation. "I feel that they do now desire to see the peace process continuing. They can see... that from the point of view of continuing republican violence, the republicans have put themselves in a corner."

Meanwhile the RUC said no decision had yet been taken concerning a proposed Apprentice Boys of Derry march around the walls of Londonderry city today. Residents of the Catholic Bogside district have said they will hold a protest meeting but the local MP, SDLP leader John Hume, appealed to them to call it off. The Apprentice Boys want 200 local members, including one band, to march along the route they were prevented from taking in August. Mr Hume said the march would take 20 to 25 minutes, with just five minutes to pass over the Bogside.

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# The golden set pay homage at the court of Sir James

Sir James Goldsmith breezed into a windy Brighton yesterday where his Referendum Party today holds its inaugural conference and tries to shrug off the claim that it is a fringe organisation.

John Major levelled the charge and claimed that people had "completely misjudged the potential impact of the Referendum Party". They would not get many votes, he said.

Sir James said it would be up to the people to decide the status of his party.

But there was confusion in the run-up to the one-day conference. Two leading members admitted that the Referendum Party could let in Labour at the election.

Then a news conference erupted as officials faced charges that they had barred journalists from the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Telegraph* who had written stories critical of the fledgling party.

The Prime Minister, on a tour of Essex and Suffolk, set the ball rolling. Claiming that the impact of Sir James's party had been completely misjudged, he said: "I don't believe they will get many votes."

"They are very much a fringe organisation and those votes will be spread across the all the political parties. I frankly don't

agree with the assessment it will damage any one particular party."

Sir James said whether his party was a fringe organisation or not would be a matter for the people to decide.

Asked to respond to Mr Major's suggestion that the Referendum Party posed no threat, he said: "Well, I am sure he is a man of great vision."

Arriving at Brighton's Grand Hotel, Sir James said: "What we are trying to have is a conference which addresses the issues so that, when the conference is finished, the issues as they really are, are available to be known to the British public."

He would address what should be in the referendum question his party was seeking to win.

"All I can say is what the question has to address, and then the exact words have to emerge from the House of Commons in a proper constitutional manner, but it has to address the fundamental issues."

Last weekend, Sir James said it must offer voters four options for the future shape of Europe: a federal superstate, a Europe of nation states cooperating together, going back to a free-trade-only Europe or pulling out altogether.



Man of Gold: Sir James Goldsmith surrounded by photographers in Brighton yesterday for the inaugural conference of his Referendum Party Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Picasso the seducer was more sinned against than sinning

Jack O'Sullivan

Pablo Picasso, one of the great artistic talents of the 20th century, has been portrayed as an incorrigible misogynist, whose life was littered with seduced and then discarded women. But an authoritative new biography argues that in fact in his relationships with women, he was "as much sinned against as sinning", and that, on at least two occasions, previously unknown mistresses rejected his proposals of marriage.

In the second volume of *A Life of Picasso*, John Richardson also argues that Picasso, born in the 19th century into a traditional Andalusian family, has been unfairly judged against the mores of the late 20th century while other chauvinists such as Rembrandt and Matisse have been spared.

The book will fuel controversy about the artist's life, which is currently the subject of a Merchant Ivory film, *Surviving Picasso*, starring Anthony Hopkins and based on Arianna Stassinopoulos's hostile biography *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer*.

"It is certainly true," Richardson said yesterday, "that Picasso treated women badly, but he also showed great compassion and tenderness."

During the First World War, he said, the Spanish artist fell in love with two women who abandoned well-advanced plans for marriage with him, leaving the legendary seducer devastated. The biography devotes a chapter to each of them.

Gaby Lespinasse was the focus of his desires in 1915. "She was a very sweet girl who was thought to have danced in the Montparnasse cabaret," Richardson says.

"Her lover was Herbert Lespinasse, whom she subsequently married, and who was one of the creators of St Tropez. He had a house there, which was a centre of bohemian life. Picasso and Gaby went there, like many others, to escape Paris during the war. They used it as a love nest."

"There are many beautiful watercolours of the rooms by the Mediterranean, that are unique in Picasso's work. On the same sheets, there are love letters and descriptions of their bedroom."

"He gave her all these, but they did not come to light until recently. They are very touching. A lot have the names of Gaby and Picasso entwined in different colours. They merge into one, their names, as it were, copulating. There is another letter, in which Picasso says 'I love you' in every different colour. Here you can see the sweet and tender side of Picasso."

"He had met Gaby while his mistress of the period, Eva, was dying of cancer. She was very young and beautiful. I don't know how he explained to her about his trips to St Tropez, because in November and December 1915 he was going almost every day to see Eva."

"When Eva died, Picasso assumed that he would marry Gaby. But she decided to marry Herbert instead. She felt



Above, *Olgia in an Armchair*, by Picasso in 1917. Picasso and Olgia married in 1918, but the bourgeois lifestyle stifled him. Below, the artist Photograph: Rex



she would have a better life with him than with a great painter who was known to be possessive and difficult.

"So, on the rebound, in the spring of 1916, Picasso fell madly in love with Irène Lagot. He and a friend, the poet, Guil-

til the end of 1916, when they decided to get married. Then at the last minute, when they were going to meet family in Barcelona, she returned to her previous lover in Paris. Irène was basically a lesbian. That is why she went back and forwards between girlfriends and then boyfriends. She led a peculiar life - she had been kept by a Russian grandduke in Moscow."

She did, however, become Picasso's mistress again in 1923 and one of Picasso's most famous works, *The Lovers* (1923), showing a young man and a woman, is reveals Richardson, of the couple.

"Irène recently died in an old people's home, aged 101," he said, "but a friend did meet her and like many old ladies with disreputable pasts, she denied all the stories. Fortunately, I found her letters in an archive in Florence."

The consequence of Picasso's second rejection, Richardson says, was that Picasso went in search once more of a wife. In spring 1917 he went to Rome to work with the Diaghilev Ballet, whose wartime headquarters were in Rome. There he met the Russian ballerina, Olga Khokhlova, whom he married in 1918 when he was 37.

He eventually tired of Olga, who introduced him to a stifling bourgeois lifestyle of middle-class conformism and order. There were to be many more mistresses, including Françoise Gilot who famously remarked that Picasso treated all women like goddesses and then as doormats. She did not mind being a goddess, but she drew the line at the doormat.

"Picasso's feelings for women were extremely intense," Richardson said. "He could not function without a woman around. Dora Maar, his mistress from 1936 to 1944, told me that when women in Picasso's life changed, everything changed: the style of painting changed, the band of friends changed, the poet - he always had a poet around - the house and the dog all changed."

"It is not strictly true, but it is quite true. And his relationship with women is reflected in his work. If he is tender with them, there is tenderness in his work. If a woman is sick you see it, as in portraits of his second wife, Jacqueline, who was frequently ill. And when women are replaced, you might have a painting with dark hair on one side and blonde on the other, so that a woman can see for herself that she is being replaced."

Picasso's women do not always appear figuratively. "I have found that after 1910 Picasso paints his mistresses not as conventional figures, but perhaps as a guitar or an instrument that could be played," Richardson said.

In one previously unknown work found in Russia, small letters are scratched in a dark corner of the painting. They are "Eva" representing Eva Gouel, his mistress at the time.

*A Life of Picasso, Vol II, 1907-1917: The painter of modern life* by John Richardson, published next month by Jonathan Cape, £30

## Sign of the times as syndrome sufferers stop defying definition

DAVID LISTER  
Arts News Editor

There is a debilitating new disease called Syndrome Syndrome. It afflicts editors of the Collins English Dictionary who spend months discovering new syndromes to put into their reference works.

Some 25 syndromes and their effects have been detailed by the seven-strong editorial team under Lorna Gilmour, the managing editor of Collins English Dictionaries. They are, says Ms Gilmour, a 90s phenomenon

and the next Collins Dictionary will contain a number of them.

Gulf War Syndrome, suffered by those who took part in the conflict, is definitely in the next edition, as is Jerusalem Syndrome - "a delusive condition affecting some visitors to Jerusalem, in which the sufferer identifies with a major figure from his or her religious background".

Those of a more temporal persuasion risk the double whammy of Affluenza - "a feeling of guilt experienced by someone who is earning a lot of money",

and the even more painful Fat Docket Syndrome - "sciatic pain caused by sitting on thick wallets".

It could be worse. You might have given up the pursuit of wealth for a healthier lifestyle. Beware Pedal Pusher's Palsy - "a condition caused by overuse of exercise bicycles with wide seats and high handlebars, requiring a position which causes pressure on the sciatic nerve".

Workers made redundant can breathe a sigh of relief that they will not fall prey to Survivor's Syndrome - "a chronic insecurity felt by employees

who have escaped 'downsizing', causing apathy and a lack of trust in their company".

Curiously the one syndrome that did make headlines this year, "Paradise Syndrome" - a feeling that things are going so well you must become ill and die, which the pop singer Dave Stewart claimed to have - has not registered with the Collins researchers. "That's a new one on us," said Lorna Gilmour. Perhaps her staff should read the papers more thoroughly or they may not last long enough to suffer Survivor's Syndrome.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



## news

# 'I believed I was pregnant. My husband died in the hope that I was and the belief that I might be'



Diane Blood: We both thought artificial insemination was a wonderful way of helping unfortunate people have children

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Diane Blood, widow of Stephen, plans to take her legal battle to have his baby to the Court of Appeal. Friends are appealing for funds to help her. This is what she told the High Court

“We had previously been courting for nine years... We were very close to both sets of parents.”

I work in advertising and public relations. I set up my own company in January 1993 under a government enterprise scheme. My main business was from a leading manufacturer of pre-school baby and nursery products. Stephen would help me with my publications for relevant articles.

Stephen and I had the good fortune to share similar religious beliefs and ethical values.

To have children was our plan right from the time when we decided (in 1988) to get engaged, pool our finances and buy a house. We believed that the responsible thing to do was to have a family only when we were confident that the time was right.

Finally, I was confident at the end of 1994 that my financial affairs were stable enough to enable us to start a family.

We both thought artificial insemination was a wonderful way of helping unfortunate people have children. It often came up in conversation... We also discussed organ donation.

We saw no objection to the posthumous use of a husband's sperm by his wife, provided that the interests of the child and of any other children of the

family were properly protected. The arguments in favour of such use struck us as particularly compelling in the case of a married couple.

Stephen wished to donate his organs for the benefit of others upon his death. I have no doubt that he would have wished sperm to be taken from him and used by me in the tragic circumstances of his untimely death.

I think probably in mid to late 1994 we talked specifically about a newspaper or magazine story about a widow who wanted to use sperm from her late husband. I remember that we talked about it sitting around the dining room table.

We thought it was lovely that, if she wanted a child, she still had the opportunity to have the child of perhaps the only man she would ever love.

We began actively trying to conceive. We installed new fitted furniture in the spare bedroom... We wondered how we would react when the child grew up and stuck horrible stickers on the new units.

We had been having regular sex without contraception. I actually believed that I was pregnant. Stephen died in the hope that I was and the belief that I might well be.

The Stephen Blood Baby Appeal can be contacted on 0121-643 4636

## Morality, ethics and interference

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

What possible social or public policy can be said to justify the “cruel and unnatural” decision to deprive Diane Blood of the use of her dead husband's sperm?

So says the fertility expert Lord Winston, Professor of Fertility Studies at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital in West London. His support for Mrs Blood's case seems the rational, commonsense point of view, in line with what large numbers of ordinary people might think was right in a case where a couple in a stable marriage planned to have children.

After all, children are born into far less satisfactory circumstances than the caring environment that would be on offer from Mrs Blood and her extended family. That the wonders of modern medical science were so freely available to Mandy Allwood – whose fertility treatment resulted in her becoming pregnant with octuplets, all of whom she miscarried this month – heightens the sense of injustice.

The alternative view is that the decision to bring what will be a fatherless child into the world is such a serious one that rigorous safeguards must be applied. At

strict application of a strict law – which was not so unreasonable, said Sir Stephen Brown, the High Court judge who on Thursday upheld the HFEA's decision to block treatment to Mrs Blood, as to entitle a court to interfere with it – is none the less in line with the inquiry's overall approach. It spelt out “grave misgivings” in its report about artificial insemination by a husband (AIH) in one type of situation.

“A man who has placed semen in a bank may die and his widow may then seek to be inseminated. This may give rise to profound psychological problems for the child and the mother... The use by a widow of her dead husband's sperm for AIH is a practice which we feel should be actively discouraged.”

The inquiry accepted that there could be some requests, and emphasised the need for “some finality for those administering estates of deceased persons since, in such cases, posthumous fertilisation could cause real problems of inheritance and succession. Account would have to be taken of issue who might be born years after the death.”

That emphasis on the pragmatic and the practical stands in harsh contrast to Diane Blood's human turmoil. Looking at the debates it was clear, Sir Stephen said, that written consent was considered to be a matter of “fundamental importance”.

Before regulation was introduced decisions of this kind would have been taken by individual clinicians based on the merits of the case. Some doctors, lawyers, legislators and lay people believe that the difficult medicoethical questions are best dealt with in this way. Experience has proved that this is not the whole answer, and has shown that even where Parliament has not intervened, anguished clinicians frequently turn to the courts to make final, often life or death, decisions.

The kinds of case that have gone to law in these circumstances are no less ethically vexed.

Take the series of decisions where, without parliamentary authority, the courts have ruled that a woman has no right to risk her own death and that of her unborn child by withholding consent to a Caesarean birth. While so far confined to cases where it is thought that both mother and baby would die, the rulings represent a trend in which the courts have edged away from the principle that medical interventions cannot be imposed except where the patient is mentally ill or unconscious.

They show that the principle of consent is becoming a much more flexible concept when seeking to preserve life but not, it seems from Diane Blood's case, when seeking to create it.

The troubling thread running through it all, which many had hoped had been long buried, is the unmistakable impression that women may not know what is best for them.

The emphasis on the pragmatic and practical stands in harsh contrast to Diane Blood's turmoil

least one doctor, and probably others, have described the process of extracting sperm from a dying man as macabre.

The feature that marks out Mrs Blood's case from a series of others where doctors have brought their ethical dilemmas before the courts is the existence of detailed legislation painstakingly drawn up by Parliament after a lengthy committee of inquiry into human fertilisation which reported in 1984.

In retrospect, even that detailed examination of the issues could not anticipate all eventualities. In her evidence to the court, Baroness Varnock, who had chaired the inquiry, highlighted the kind of fine dividing line which no one had foreseen: “In the case of posthumous birth, we envisaged that is a general rule, sperm would have been frozen with a view to pregnancy before a man became ill, or at the onset of his illness, and that therefore agreement would be presumed, the couple being treated as one [in which case no written consent is required]. We did not even hypothetically consider the present case.”

But the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's

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# Albert v Ronald in battle of the burger

Jojo Moyes

As the two-year McLibel trial slowly draws to a close, an alternative campaign appears to be gaining ground. On the one side is McDonald's and a burgeoning legal team; on the other one Albert Beale, from Bloomsbury, London.

He is frustrating the fast food giant's attempts to extend opening hours at two London branches. So successful has he been that he is offering himself as a "freelance anti-planning consultant" to other people wishing to oppose Mc-



Relishing a battle: Albert Beale is offering himself as an "anti-planning consultant" to those who oppose McDonald's applications for late licences. Photograph: Kevin Weaver



Donald's late licences.

Mr Beale, who edits an international directory of peace and environmental organisations from King's Cross, in London, began his campaign when he found that two McDonald's branches near his home - one in King's Cross and one in New Oxford Street - had applied for late licences.

"I'm the kind of person who goes around reading small print. I thought well, as a concerned local citizen, I don't like this. I lodged lengthy objections with

Camden council pointing out that there would be the added litter, plus local disturbance in a residential area. One of the local ward councillors has even written to the licensing com-

mittee in support of my objections."

Mr Beale also objected on the grounds that he considered McDonald's to be "not fit and proper". At the first coun-

cil hearing in July, he presented 40 pages of manuscript from the McLibel trial - which concerns a leaflet about the burger company - to support his claim. The licensing hearing, at-

tended by two McDonald's representatives and a planning consultant, was deferred.

At the second meeting McDonald's was represented by eight people, including lawyers

from a top legal firm. Mr Beale managed to again have the decision deferred. By the third meeting, last Tuesday, McDonald's team had grown to nine. The licensing committee

overruled McDonald's objections to the campaigner's request to film the meeting for the McSpotlight Internet site, part of a campaign supporting the two defendants in the McLibel

trial. After four hours of technical argument, Mr Beale managed to ensure decisions on both applications were again deferred.

As the meeting was adjourned, McDonald's lawyer, Philip Kolhill, told the committee: "We're not going to wait forever," to which the chairman replied: "In that case, it could be no."

Mr Beale sees himself as an expensive little thorn in McDonald's side. But he accepts that if refused late licences, McDonald's is likely to continue the legal process and this could be risky for local councils who do not want huge legal bills.

In the meantime, he and a fellow objector hope to extend their campaign. "To be honest, I didn't think I'd last the first meeting," McDonald's were certainly surprised that we've fought them through three."

Mr Beale thinks the battle will end with his weeks, but he is producing a fact sheet on how people can block other McDonald's late licences.

"They've got to renew their night licences every year so we'll block them every year. Since McDonald's can be represented by a consultant, we will offer ourselves as anti-planning consultants free."

A spokesman for McDonald's said yesterday that Mr Beale was known as an anti-McDonald's campaigner. He said there was "nothing unusual" in the extended committee hearings, or in the number of people McDonald's employed to attend.

# bring you all this

## Blair's drinks party raises Tory hackles

John Rentoul  
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair has been accused of breaking 19th-century laws against "corrupt practices" by providing voters in two key marginal seats with free drinks.

New voters coming on to the electoral register in Blackpool were invited to a party on the Saturday before this month's Labour conference for the chance to meet Tony Blair and "have a good night out".

Harold Eleton, the Conservative MP for Blackpool North, yesterday threatened legal action under the law against "treating" - the practice of providing free food or drink to influence electors which was an accepted feature of British elections until the Reform Act of 1832.

Most of the drink at the party for young people was sold at a cash bar, but some was provided free by Creation Records, the Oasis record company which sponsored the event.

The local Labour Party invited people on the electoral roll in the two Blackpool constituencies who turned 18 this year, and some who have reached voting age since the last election. They were contacted by telephone and around 200 turned up at the Norbreck Castle hotel.

A Labour spokesman said the purpose of the event was to let young people see that "we're not all anoraks with glasses held together by sticking plaster". The party featured a band called 18-Wheeler. "It was a normal Saturday night out," the spokesman said.

But Mr Eleton told *The Independent*:

"I am shocked and disgusted by such a blatant attempt to undermine the democratic process."

He is defending a notional 7,000 majority on new boundaries; Blackpool South is now an ultra-marginal seat with a majority of less than 400 and a Tory MP, Nick Hawkins, who has gone on the "chicken run" to a safe southern England seat.

Mr Eleton said he had taken advice from Tory Central Office, which was that, if the event was held on behalf of the Labour candidates in those seats, it could be illegal. "This appears to be a corrupt practice. If the Labour Party cannot provide answers as to exactly what they were up to, I will take this further," he said. The Labour spokesman described the complaint as "nonsense".

"Treating" was outlawed in 1832, in measures now incorporated in the Representation of the People Act 1983. An official at Central Office in London, said he was "looking for people at the event who would be prepared to testify". He said the party was reminiscent of the days of rotten boroughs and bought elections. It was "something that most agents would not do because it's too close to breaching the spirit of the law if not the letter".

For treating to be a criminal offence, somebody has to be "corrupted and induced by treating" to vote in a particular way, which would be difficult to prove. But it would still be illegal if "refreshments were deliberately provided to influence an election", according to one summary of electoral law.

## Gun clubs may get lottery cash

Michael Streeter

Gun clubs threatened with closure by the Government's proposed ban on most handguns could be eligible for money from the National Lottery to help them stay in business.

National officials from shooting organisations are urging clubs to apply for grants from the Sports Council to improve the security of their buildings, which must meet stringent requirements to store 22 calibre pistols and handguns. These are the only handguns to escape the ban announced early this week in the wake of the Cullen report into the Dunblane massacre last March in which 16 children and a teacher were shot dead.

The Sports Council confirmed that such bids would be considered, and could meet the funding guidelines. A spokeswoman for the council said that one aim of the grants was to improve clubhouses. And increasing security was a way of doing that, she said.

Before a moratorium on

grants to gun clubs which followed Dunblane, nine organisations had received a total of £263,000 in lottery cash.

Colonel John Hoare, the secretary of the National Smallbore Rifle Association, said: "We believe they will be legitimate claims. The purpose of the grants is to increase the participation of the young and the disabled. We need to broaden the base of the participants if we are to continue to compete in the Olympics."

Jackie Walsh, of the Dunblane-based Sowdow Campaign which wants to see a ban on all handguns, said: "This is an appalling idea. The Government appears to be taking with one hand but giving back with the other. In some cases clubs will be better off than they were before."

Richard Douthley, spokesman for Gally Hill Shooting Club in Surrey, said it won £99,000 lottery money last January and would build a clubhouse to meet the security requirements. Without that, "we could not have survived," he said.

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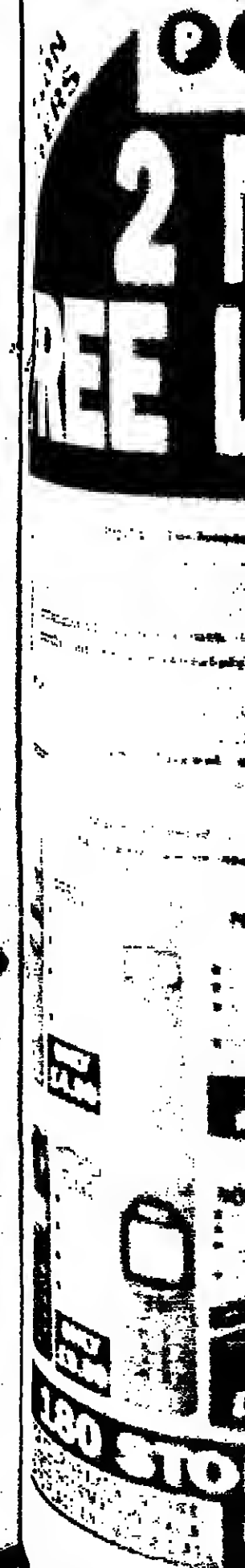
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# Dorrell acts to protect children

Glenda Cooper

Ministers acted yesterday to protect children in residential homes following a wave of scandals which exposed widespread sexual and physical abuse. Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, told the Association of Directors for Social Services annual conference that ministers would tighten the law and extend regulations on registration to homes with less than four children. The move was announced amid a rise in the number of small homes for children, and increasing concern about abuse. Last year, a highly critical report by the Social Services Inspectorate warned that lack of registration in privately run children's homes meant that sex abusers have been able to set up institutions, with local authorities often taking a "lax approach" to investigating them. The inspectorate said that in some small homes it found fraudsters working, and people subsequently convicted of sexual and physical abuse. At present, small homes do not have to register under the 1989 Children's Act, nor are they obliged to carry out police checks. "It is anomalous that [these homes] should be exempt from registration," said Mr Dorrell, "particularly in a field where the risks of abuse are well-known." Changes in social services over recent years meant the regulatory system, aimed at protecting vulnerable people, was out of date, he said. His speech came as a report was published on the regulation and inspection of social services. The study, by a former civil servant, Tom Burgner, makes a number of key recommendations, including calls for trading standards or councils' chief executive departments to take over responsibility from social services for inspecting care homes.

"It seems clear that there is a gap in regulatory arrangements that leaves vulnerable children at risk," says the report. "The absence of a requirement to register is a fundamental handicap in ensuring that an adequate standard of care is being provided." Mr Burgner added that local authority homes should be subject to the same rules as homes run by the voluntary and private sector, and that there should be new national benchmarks on standards for homes operated by councils and others. Mr Dorrell said that the Government had accepted these recommendations and that a White Paper aimed at closing gaps would be published in January. "We are committed to promoting and defending high standards of professional practice," he told the conference in Edinburgh. "The time is right for further development of practice and conduct standards." Mr Burgner's report also covered the regulation of residential care and nursing homes for the elderly, suggesting that the legal distinction between the two should be abolished. "Our initial view is that the case for this kind of 'single care home' has not been convincingly made," said Mr Dorrell. "But we want to hear what others think about this key issue." Counsel and Care, the charity which gives help to older people, urged the Government to go further on inspection for homes, saying the announcements were "inadequate". "We welcome the Government's announcement," said Jeff Smith, the charity's general manager. "But those outlined do not go far enough. There needs to be a new, tougher system to promote high and consistent standards of care and to span the current professional split between residential care and nursing homes."

# Durham asks who really is who in college row



Matter of principal: Criticisms of Dr Duane Arnold (below) have soured the 'once happy' atmosphere at St Chad's College - part of Durham University. Photographs: North News

## University community split as tutors lose confidence in their principal

Ben Summers and Paul Tyrrell

The future of the principal of one of Durham University's most prestigious colleges has been thrown into doubt after he was found to have supplied misleading accounts of his background to the university and *Who's Who*. The Rev Duane Arnold, 43, was heralded as Durham's answer to some of Oxford's famously flamboyant and eccentric dons when he was appointed principal of St Chad's in 1994. Since then, there has indeed been spectacle - rumoured to include high-tail toasts to "His Imperial Majesty King Edward VII", and a new candlelit inauguration ceremony, in Latin, for freshmen. But there has also been controversy. Thirteen college tutors, among them the chaplain and vice-principal, have left office since Dr Arnold's arrival from the US in October 1994. Four of the tutors were on the college council, which is instrumental in deciding policy; another nine council members have also departed, plus four non-teaching staff, including the college secretary and accountant. On his resignation from the college, senior lecturer Charles Shaw wrote to the JCR president: "I feel great regret that I am leaving what was once a happy college and guilt for deserting you at a time when all St Chad's students will need such moral support. I hope that you will keep in touch and that we shall meet again in college in happier times. In the meantime, I shall not set foot in St Chad's while Dr Arnold is principal."

A letter sent to Dr Arnold on June 1 1996 and signed by 14 college tutors read: "We are deeply concerned about the disruption to the orderly and harmonious working of the college, due to the breakdown in personal relationships. We therefore wish to record that we cannot continue to have confidence in you as principal of St Chad's college." In a statement issued on 11 October, Durham University said that although it had "no doubt that the principal holds the qualifications necessary for the post to which he was appointed", it was informing the college - Dr Arnold's employer - that it had found "discrepancies" in "material which was supplied to the university for an application for a work permit in 1994". Until yesterday, the college council, whose head is the Rt Rev Michael Henshall, Bishop of Warrington, made it clear it was supporting Dr Arnold. Yesterday, however, the Bishop issued a statement which said he was now investigating the allegations, and that "in due course the college council will form a view and act accordingly". Dr Arnold was unavailable for comment yesterday, but he was earlier reported to have blamed the discrepancies on clerical errors, which he had dealt with as soon as they were drawn to his attention.



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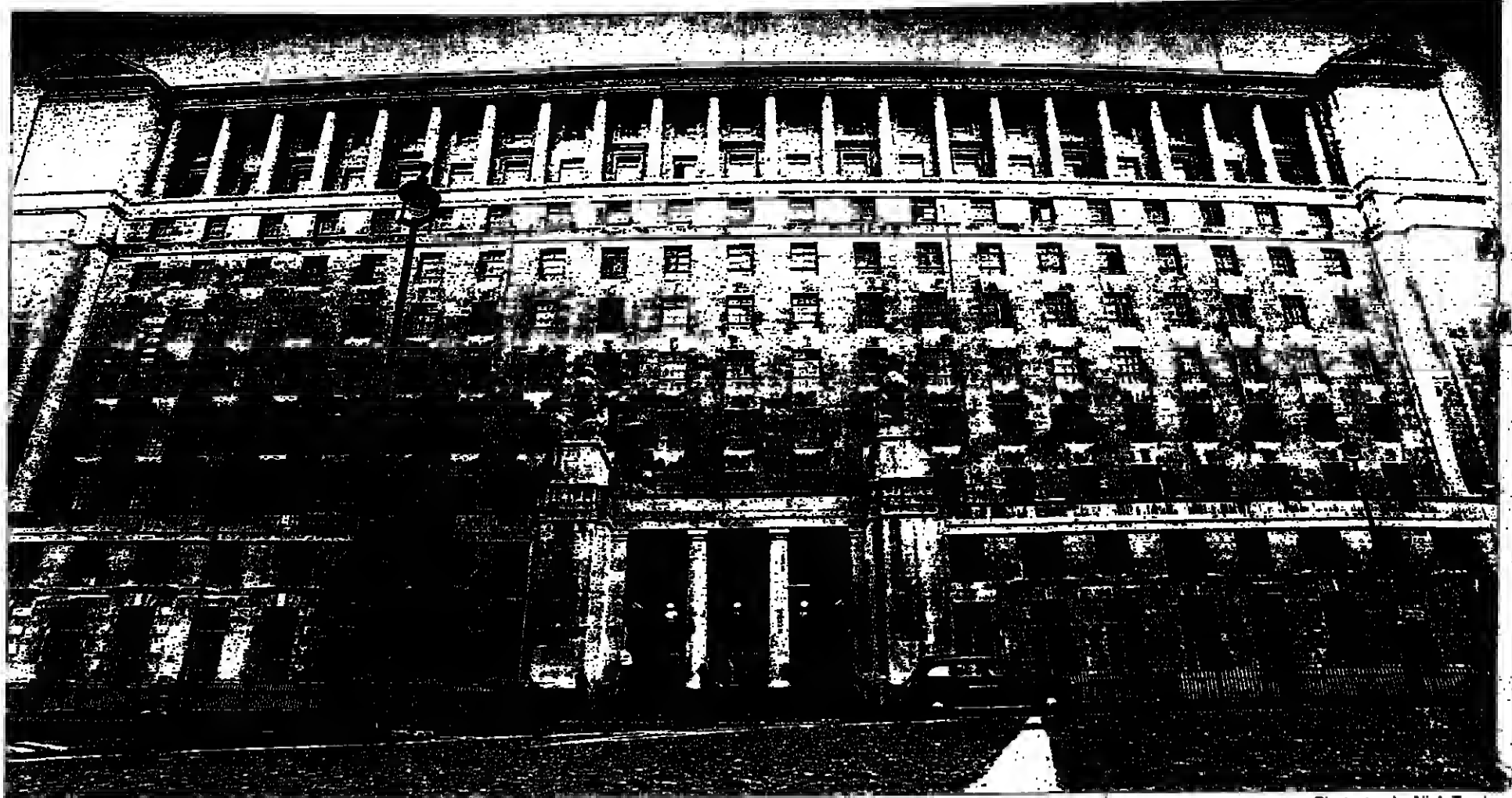
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## news

# The heart of Britain's defence up for offer: Overseas buyers welcome



Empire building: The Ministry of Defence in Whitehall - foreign bidders are being invited to put a price upon its worth

Photograph: Nick Turpin

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

The Ministry of Defence building in Whitehall could be sold to a foreign bidder under plans for a lease-back arrangement to pay for a £165m redevelopment of the building.

It is part of the Government's search for cuts in public expenditure, but senior

ministers have warned the Treasury that any deeper cuts in the defence budget would hit the front-line capability, and risk breaking a clear commitment.

The statues of war heroes such as Montgomery and Slim are mute, but the sale raises questions about what they would have said if they had known the MoD building itself was to be sold to a potential foreign buyer. The

building is being prepared for sale as part of the Government's private finance initiative scheme. A Japanese bank, Nomura International, was part of the consortium which recently agreed to pay £1.6bn for the MoD married quarters. Defence officials said last night that it was too soon to say who would be potential bidders for the 91,998 sq metres of office space in the prime central London spot, but foreign bidders were not being ruled out.

Although the ownership would change, the MoD would retain a very long lease on the building and under these terms, one leading property adviser said yesterday that the sale of the building could be in the region of £175m. For security reasons, the

MoD will remain in control of the entire building. Two other MoD buildings in central London - Northumberland House and Metropole House in Northumberland Avenue - will be closed and offered for sale as part of the deal. The MoD would retain the old War Office and the defence secretary's grace-and-favour flat in the old Admiralty

building near Admiralty Arch. The move to sell the MoD building is part of the Government's private finance initiative. It could take place in 1998-99, which would mean that refurbishment work would not be completed until the next century.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, warned the Cabinet last week that deeper cuts in spend-

ing would be needed to find room for tax cuts in the forthcoming Budget before chairing a Cabinet expenditure committee (EDX) to try to cut up to £5bn off public expenditure totals. But ministers believe cuts of that order could be too much to expect in an election year. "It is going to be very tight in the sense that getting spending

down is not easy and certain departments are fighting fiercely," said a source. Defence, roads, prisons and social security are in line for cuts. Mr Clarke reviewed the options with senior ministers and officials, including the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise last Friday at Dorneywood, in Buckinghamshire, the Chancellor's official country residence.

## Major confesses to a blot in the finances

John Rentoul  
Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister gave a bluntly honest assessment of the country's economic prospects yesterday, describing higher-than-forecast government borrowing as a "blot on the horizon" and a "problem".

His comments seemed to close down the option of tax cuts as Treasury ministers met to discuss next month's Budget in Dorneywood, the Chancellor's country residence.

John Major told business leaders at a breakfast in Chelmsford, Essex: "Inflation is as much under lock and key as I can ever remember it and inward investment is rising. The only economic blot on the horizon is the size of the fiscal deficit. That is a problem."

Labour seized on the admission that the City was right to be worried about public borrowing. Figures this week sug-

gested this year's borrowing figure could be higher than the £27bn forecast by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, only four months ago. That figure was already £4.5bn higher than Mr Clarke's forecast in last November's Budget.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, said: "Mr Major's frank admission reveals the true state of public finances which the Tories have been trying to conceal. The fact is that the parlous state of public finances reveals the long-term weakness of the economy."

He repeated his call for an independent audit of government finances before the Budget. The Prime Minister's unusually frank comments contrast with recent assertions that borrowing is under control. This week's latest borrowing figures were said by the Treasury to have been "distorted".

But they back up Mr Clarke's

comments three weeks ago which caused near apoplexy among many Tory MPs. "It is not the case that my Budget requires tax cuts in order to win the election," he told GMTV. "The public will be deeply suspicious of any tax cuts because they remember we promised tax cuts last time and unfortunately we weren't able to deliver them."

Part of the explanation for Mr Major and Mr Clarke's comments may have been the annual ritual of lowering expectations in advance of the Budget - and of pre-empting pressure from Conservative backbenchers for dramatic tax cuts.

But it would be difficult for Mr Clarke now to justify tax cuts approaching the top end of City expectations, of between £2bn and £4bn. And it would be almost impossible for him to cut the standard rate of income tax to 20p in the pound - the Tories' long-term objective.

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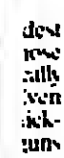
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# Meltdown puts guns back on the street

A US project has found a new use for weapons - as manhole covers

David Osborne  
Hartford, Connecticut

Stacked three-deep on sagging wooden pallets, the manhole covers are yellowing with oxidation. Obviously, they are fresh from the foundry. Only closer inspection reveals their other, more exceptional, secret: they are also fresh from the killing fields of modern urban America. Oven-fresh, in fact.

Arranged for public viewing outside the Wadsworth Athenaeum gallery in Hartford, the covers, 228 in all, are more than an unusual art exhibit. They are also a memorial to the thousands of Americans, most of them young men, cut down by the bullet.

How so? Because they have been moulded from iron melted down from 11,194 illegal guns collected by Connecticut's police since 1992.

Created by Maine artist Bradley McCallum and unveiled for public viewing this week, few projects have so vividly depicted the scale of America's firearms crisis or, more pertinently, of the efforts of its law enforcement and political leaders to get to grips with gun control.

In this state alone, 320 young people have been killed by guns since 1988, many of them in Hartford itself.

There is an added poignancy to their presence. This city is the home of Sam Colt, who introduced the first revolving-chamber handgun, and who, just to the south of here, once operated the world's biggest firearms factory.

Next spring, the covers will be symbolically returned to the streets where, today, so many of the gun battles are fought. Some of the covers, which bear "SEWER" in large print around their outside, will be installed in the streets around the gallery.

Many others, however, will be placed around Hartford schools and in neighbourhoods where gun violence has been most prevalent.

Their origins, meanwhile, will be on display for all to see. Imprinted on each cover is the message: "Made from 172 lbs of your confiscated guns". In addition is the Latin motto of the Colt company: *Vincit qui paratur* and its two optional translations: "He who perseveres is victorious" and "He who suffers conquers".

In fact, the state of Connecticut has been sending guns confiscated by the police to a Massachusetts foundry where all of the state's manhole covers are made since 1992.

The practice was instituted by the former Connecticut governor, Lowell Weicker. Previously, guns collected by the police were sold at auction, which meant many of them finding their way back to the streets and to acts of crime.

"Hopefully, this project will serve as a catalyst for dialogue that will address how we can manage guns in a instructive way," said McCallum, who has entitled his exhibit: *The Manhole Cover Project: A Gun Legacy*. He likens his work to the old adage of beating swords into ploughshares.

Viewers of the piles of covers can also listen at audio stations to testimonies from a collection of local teenagers who have either witnessed gun violence, been the victims of it, or shot someone themselves.

One voice is of young black man, who, with his mother, witnessed a close friend being gunned down while driving through a city neighbourhood in his car.

Minutes earlier, he had been with him in the car. "You know, it is always like that. I was just with him. People are always saying that. And you think that could have been you". He calls his a "lost generation" because of gun violence, and blames the police and the government. "They make 'em [guns] available to us".

Among those feeling the power of McCallum's exhibition is Inez Yoder, a retired visitor from California. "I think what he has done is just wonderful," she says.

"You look at these covers and you understand the weight of it all. And I mean that literally and figuratively".



Heavy metal: Bradley McCallum with his exhibit of manhole covers made from melted-down guns

# Faker sticks one on the Prado

Elizabeth Nash  
Madrid

The Prado museum in Madrid, which has suffered repeated blows to its prestige in recent months, is reeling from the revelation that a fake was glued to the wall of one of its hallowed rooms and went unnoticed for four days.

The picture, by an unknown artist, was put up in room 59, which contains works by Rembrandt. It was discovered when two tourists tried to identify it.

The traumatised museum announced late on Thursday - a week after the hoax was perpetrated - that it would investigate what went wrong and make public the results. A former Prado director, Alfonso Perez Sanchez, described the lapse as "an unpardonable and very serious failure" of the museum's security systems.

The stunt has revealed a seething malaise that has long afflicted employees of the museum, which has one of the world's finest art collections. The 30cm by 40cm fake,

signed by "VR Roizo" and depicting a skull, is entitled *The Aftermath*. Framed in the same gilded style as its fellows, it rusted inconspicuously amid a clutch of distinguished Flemish still-lives. The museum's curator of Flemish paintings, Matias Diaz Padron, said it was "quite well done, the work of a painter of some quality".

The hoax is thought to have been carried out while the museum was closed, prompting speculation that it was an inside job. A security guard reported an extra painting in room 59 on Friday 11 October but the offending work was not removed until the following Tuesday.

A row is raging between security guards responsible for the museum's interior - public employees on the Prado payroll - and those on the doors who are employed by a security company. Those responsible for the interior say they are desperately short-staffed and that the management never informs them of constant changes in paintings' whereabouts caused by an extensive programme of repairs.

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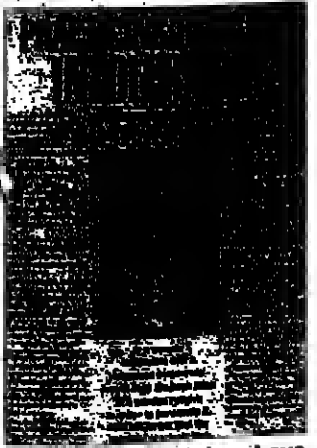
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# Scientologists declare war on 'Nazi Germany'

Barrie Karacs  
Bonn

After months of skirmishes, the Church of Scientology has declared total war on 'Germany', accusing it of Nazi-style tactics towards adherents of the California-based religion. A full-page advertisement in Thursday's *New York Times* newspaper drew parallels between the Holocaust and German attempts to curtail the activities of Scientologists.



Scientologists' claims have enraged Holocaust survivors

Headlined "Germany Then and Now" and appearing under the aegis of the imperial eagle, the advertisement has provoked a furious reaction from Holocaust survivors and the US State Department, and an embarrassed silence from German members of the sect. "You may wonder why German officials discriminate against Scientologists," the advertisement said. "There is no legitimate reason but then there was none that justified the persecution of the Jewish people either."

The Jews, understandably, were underwhelmed by the comparison. Ignatz Bubis, the leader of Germany's Jewish community, accused the Scientologists of falsifying history. The advertisement, he said, was "an insult to German politicians and especially disparages remembrance of the suffering endured by his people."

Even the United States government, which in the past had expressed criticism of Bonn's heavy handed treatment of the church, rushed to Germany's defence on this occasion.

"This is an outrageous charge against the German government by an American group," Nicholas Burns, the State Department spokesman, said. "It bears no resemblance to the facts of what's going on there. The language used is needlessly provocative and not constructive, given the history of Germany." The German branch of the church would not comment.

Relations between the Church of Scientology and Germany have been deteriorating since earlier this year, when the Bonn government published a pamphlet accusing the sect of totalitarian tendencies. Several ministers have proposed a ban on the organisation, and an expulsion of church members from the civil service.



## STRUGGLE FOR THE KREMLIN

# Lebed's path beset with political traps

Phil Reeves  
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin's sacking of Alexander Lebed has certainly brought the security man closer to fulfilling his burning ambition to be Russia's next president, but the road ahead is littered with tank traps which could easily bring his route to a halt.

As the reserve general yesterday scanned the cratered political landscape after being abruptly jettisoned from the Kremlin by Mr Yeltsin's innermost coterie, he must surely have concluded that his position was strong, but not entirely secure.

No one disputes that Mr Lebed, with his strong military support, is the clear favourite to win an election if Mr Yeltsin dies or stands down from office in the near future. But his prospects are less assured if the President remains in office for any length of time - either by recovering from his pending heart-bypass operation, or as a remote and sickly figurehead, controlled by his chief-of-staff, Anatoly Chubais, and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Yesterday Mr Lebed dryly revealed he was planning a trip to the theatre in Moscow to see *Hamlet*, saying the play, whose plot drips with intrigue and assorted skulduggery, would help him learn how to rule the country. (This was presumably a joke at the dark machinations of the Kremlin elite who brought about his sacking.) But he first needs to learn how to win the

## Road to power

nation's vote, given that he says he is committed to democratic elections. Even before he was stripped of the secretaryship of the Security Council by Mr Yeltsin, he had become an opposition figure, hounding the government from the sidelines over the issues from which he stands to gain most - the Chechen war, military reform and the neglect of the army. He is sure to carry on doing so, sowing fears that he could destabilise the already angry and volatile military. "It is what everyone has feared for so long," said one western diplomat.

"An exile politician of his stature could be the rallying point for disaffected military officers."

Yet he is not yet particularly well-equipped for a long campaign. He has no large financial backing, no significant party, and no guarantee of national media support - vital factors if he is to re-emerge from the political wilderness.

Funds from Russian big business may not prove difficult to attract, so long as his chances of power remain high, although it will probably require a political trade-off. Nor will he necessarily experience the complete freeze-out that Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist candidate in July's presidential election, experienced at the hands of Russia's national television companies.

Although they were manipulated by the Kremlin much of their censorship was self-imposed by jour-

nalists who were willing to compromise fairness in order to avert what they feared would be a Communist crack-down on free speech. If the Yeltsin administration's popularity continues to slide, then the mass media may be willing to switch horses.

Currying favour may not be easy, as he already has some powerful media enemies. Several Russian papers welcomed his firing - marking a change of tone from the broad approval that greeted his appointment. "He is an hysterical and inadequate politician," said *Kommersant*.

He also lacks a nationwide party infrastructure. Last week, three small political groups which support him formed a union which could provide him with an organisational framework. But Mr Lebed is not a particularly good organiser, preferring showmanship to paperwork. He is also a loner, who finds it difficult to forge alliances with other politicians without quarrelling.

Yet if these factors depress the general, then he can take heart from the experience of Boris Yeltsin. He, too, was dispatched into exile - in 1987 when he was dismissed from the Politburo by Mikhail Gorbachev. After four years he returned to humiliate the Soviet president, and take power. And who was the one man who rushed loyally to his side and stayed there during his hour of deepest isolation? The former presidential bodyguard, General Alexander Korzhakov, Mr Lebed's latest ally.



Smoking gun: Alexander Lebed's chances of to power will diminish the longer Boris Yeltsin stays at the helm

Photograph: AP

## Chechens fear that war will return

Carlotta Gall  
Grozny

### Peace in danger

People in Chechnya greeted the news of Alexander Lebed's removal with apprehension. "We are very anxious, the struggle for power that is going on in Moscow is far from funny," said chief Chechen spokesman Movladi Udugov. "Lebed was and is the key to a peaceful settlement in Chechnya and it is thanks to him there is no more shooting," he said.

The Chechen leadership issued a statement yesterday supporting the peace process and continuation of political dialogue. "But we are ready for any unexpected turn of events, if the war starts tomorrow we will not be especially surprised," Udugov said.

The Russian deputy interior minister, Valery Fyodorov, exuded a sense of calm and order as he inspected a police unit sharing quarters with the Chechen fighters. "There should be no anxiety," over Lebed's departure, he said. "People come and go and the president stays the same. Questions of war and peace are the decision of the president and the

government." The withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya would continue, said the commander of Russian interior ministry troops in Grozny, General Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov, as would work on prisoner exchanges.

But the Chechen separatists all said that Lebed was still needed to keep the peace process going. Although many of the Russian troops have been pulled in to two Russian bases on the north and east edges of Grozny, there are still scattered posts on the central plains around the city and concentrations of troops to the north of the republic, they said. No agreement has been reached for the withdrawal of the last two brigades numbering an estimated 18,000 men.

"I took part in some of the peace talks and I think Lebed was truly interested in finding a lasting peace," said Aslanbek Ismailov, one of Chechnya's top commanders who has been in charge in Grozny since the rebels seized it. "At the moment there is no one better than Lebed," he said.

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# Yeltsin's men fight to keep up appearances



"Tula guns, samovars, cakes, steelware and powerful modern weapons are famous not only in the country but all over the world. The city is lit up with the flame of blast furnaces and the undying spiritual light of Yasnaya Polyana," the President wrote, referring to Leo Tolstoy's estate, which is in the region.

The anti-Lebedites are led by Mr Yeltsin's administrative chief of staff, Anatoly Chubais, and the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and include the President's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, and the hard-line Interior Minister, Anatoly Kulikov. The first three clearly have Mr Yeltsin's ear at present and may have

Lyudmila Telen, a Russian political commentator, said the main consequence of Mr Yeltsin's illness is that "at the moment, all members of Russia's state hierarchy are trying to swallow up as much power as they think they need".

**Photograph: AF**

**Christopher Bellamy**  
Defence Correspondent

In some ways, the removal of Mr Lebed as a security supreme covering the three ministries who have armed forces, Defence, the Security Ministry and the Interior Ministry, will simplify matters. It will probably give more freedom to the Defence Minister, Colonel-General Igor Rodionov. General Rodionov was appointed by Mr Lebed, but since then they have drifted apart. On Tuesday, just before he was sacked, Mr Lebed criticised General Rodionov for reorganizing the airborne forces - Russia's elite

General Rodionov has said he wants the position and role of the armed forces clearly defined. "The army cannot remain aloof from participation in the country's political life. But this must be codified legislatively, so as not to put military personnel in an awkward situation," he said in December last year.

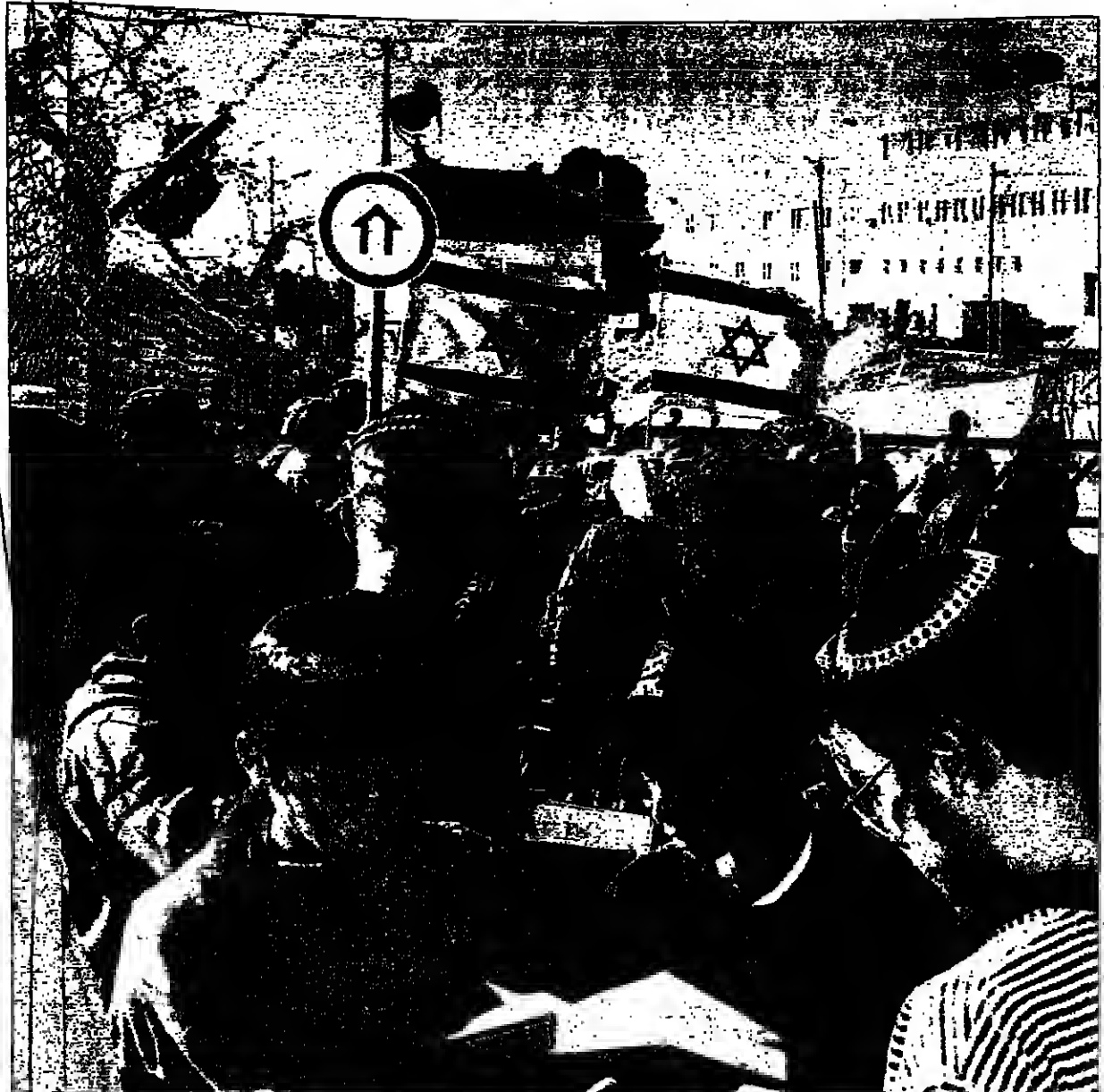


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Hebrew Israeli boys read the Torah as some 100 Jewish settler women and children block the gate to the Israeli military HQ in Hebron, while, in Taba, talks resume over the deadlock on Israeli troop redeployment. Photograph: Reuters

## Chirac tour aims to win Middle East role

Mary Dejevsky  
Paris

France's inveterate diplomatic traveller, President Jacques Chirac, sets out today on a week-long mission to try to secure a place for France at the top table of Middle East diplomacy. It is his second trip to the region since he took office, and one of the longest foreign tours he has undertaken. It is also seen by French diplomats as one of the most difficult.

The complexities of the tour, which will take him from Syria to Egypt, via Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan and Lebanon, were underlined less than 48 hours before he set off by an announcement that the foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, would not be accompanying him on the Israeli leg of the journey. Israel had objected to plans for him to visit Orient House, the Palestinian representation, in East Jerusalem.

It is a policy agreed in the European Union that EU foreign ministers visiting Israeli officials in Jerusalem should also visit Orient House - signifying that they regard the question of jurisdiction in Jerusalem as open. This Israel does not accept. Mr Chirac will now be accompanied to Jerusalem by Hervé Gayraud, the health minister, who will go to Orient House.

France also appears to have made some late modifications to its ambitions for Mr Chirac's tour, which was planned several months ago, as a highlight of his diary. Initially, it seems, there were hopes for some sort of diplomatic coup that could break the current Israeli-Palestinian stalemate. The French news agency, AFP, which receives separate, official, briefings on such matters, reported earlier this week, for instance, that France intended to "play a role in relaunching the peace process, despite the reservations of the Americans and Israelis".

The following day, the formulation was that France intended to try to "support" the peace process. And by yesterday it seemed that any thoughts of influencing the peace process at all were being buried. In the pre-visit briefing, the Elysée spokesman said that Mr Chirac would go "not as mediator, but with a message of peace" - the inference being that it might not be reciprocated.

As if to underline this, the Israeli foreign minister, David Levy, was quoted in several French reports as saying "the participation of a third partner (in the peace process) can only complicate things". During a visit to Paris last month, he made no secret of his view that French policy favoured the Arabs.



Chirac: Wants to restore French influence in region

Officials in France's Gaullist administration deny this. They do, however, believe France's historical ties with the Arab world give it an advantage in Middle Eastern diplomacy that has not been sufficiently exploited. They blame France's former president, François Mitterrand, for undermining this by leaning towards Israel.

Mr Chirac has tried hard to restore France's special position in the Arab world. He has personally visited Lebanon, Egypt and the Gulf, and recently disassociated France from the US bombing of Iraq. The public dispute with Israel over Mr de Charette's visit to Jerusalem will hardly harm him in Arab eyes. But Mr Chirac has also tried

to use this "special relationship" with the Arabs to establish a French role in the Middle East peace process. During the last but one Israeli-Arab crisis, Mr Chirac annoyed the Americans by dispatching Mr de Charette to track the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, around the Middle East, and was delighted when he returned with a place for France at the ensuing talks.

That achievement, however, was almost completely undone by the election of Benjamin Netanyahu in April, the subsequent stalling of the peace process and the restoration of the US monopoly on what remained of it.

One point Mr Chirac intends to make during his tour, is that Europe should have a seat at the diplomatic table, if only because it is footing 80 per cent of the bill for Palestinian aid. Mr Chirac's apparent belief that it is he that should do the representing, however, may not go down well in London and Bonn, which both support the US role, or in Dublin, which holds the EU presidency. Irish officials said yesterday that Mr Chirac's trip was "purely bilateral". US officials were guarded, saying Mr Chirac's trip had been planned for a long time and that "everyone's suggestions" on the Middle East were "welcome".

## Kurdish rivals battle near Irbil

YALMONARAN  
Associated Press

Irbil - Kurdish factions battled on Thursday around this northern city yesterday, and Iraqi-backed Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) said it had taken a town lost earlier in the week to its rival.

The Iraqi-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) dispute claim, but confirmed fighting at Kuyisanjaq, 25 south-east of Irbil. Irbil is quiet, as residents waiting after hiding in the mountains for three days, when the PUK retake the 10-week-long counter-offensive against the KDP.

Things went on after UN officials voiced concern about the reported northward movement of Iraqi troops. The PUK warned that any potential Kurdish forces would be a mistake.

PUK moved into Kuyisanjaq, the second largest town, from the KDP on Sunday. The PUK halted its offensive about 20 miles east of Irbil. Yesterday, ground and artillery fought to the



east, south-east and north-east of the city, close to the Iranian border. There was also fighting near Diyala, about 130km (80 miles) east of Irbil, and east of Rawanduz in Iran.

Iraq, Iran, the US and Turkey have all called on the Kurdish factions to stop fighting, and have offered mediation. The US Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Pelletreau, plans to travel to the region this week-end to meet Kurdish leaders.

Although there is no evidence that Iraqi troops have moved to interfere in the recent fighting, the PUK may have halted its advance outside Irbil to avoid a possible confrontation with President Saddam's army.

## TWA report to open can of worms

Christian Amon  
The Independent

The news that the world's airlines are in a dreadful ever since the TWA flight 800 went down in the Atlantic last week, is like a can of worms.

Investigations of the crash which killed 230 people in the Boeing 747 on July 17 when the plane disintegrated soon after take-off from New York are close to finding that the disaster was caused by a mechanical failure rather than a bomb.

If it is confirmed as a mechanical failure, the implications for airlines are extremely serious. Boeing 747s, and more than 700 of them are in service, such as the one involved in the TWA disaster. While finding of a bomb would lead to the usual requests for better security at airports, the prospect of a mechanical failure has caused the possibility of late changes being made to the world's "work-horse" jetliners.

Investigators have also not found a reason for the loss of the Boeing 757 which plunged into the sea earlier this month, killing all 70 people aboard.

Thousands after the New York crash, and with no definitive explanation about a bomb,

the likelihood of a terrorist attack having caused the accident recedes.

It took investigators only a few days after the 1988 Lockerbie to decide that a bomb was the cause, because traces of chemicals that could only have come from a bomb were found. While the job of the investigators of the TWA crash was made more difficult because all the debris were in the sea, more than 90 per cent of the plane has now been recovered and there is no evidence of a bomb.

The investigators have pinpointed a centre fuel tank on one of the wings as the site of the explosion which destroyed the plane and, despite 80 per cent of the tank having been recovered, no trace of an explosive device has been found. In fact, metallurgical tests are much more suggestive of a mechanical failure than a bomb.

According to a report in yesterday's Washington Post, investigators say that tests have shown that parts of the fuel tank were blown outward, suggesting the blast occurred inside it. And they have found no sign of any metal posted in towards the tank which would be the case if a bomb had been hidden nearby in the cabin. The Post reports: "Safety investigators say a mechanical malfunction now seems a more likely explanation for why Flight 800 went down".

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# international

## Dole faces disappointment as he gambles on the Golden State

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Rupert Cornwell  
Yorba Linda

Here, in a terraced garden shaded by palms and perfumed by roses, Bob Dole's mentor lies at peace at last. Richard Nixon's grave is just a few feet from the white-painted house which his father built with his own hands in 1912, and where the 37th president was born a year later. Today it is part of the Nixon Library and Museum. There, visitors may re-live that extraordinary career, and listen to the gravelly Nixon voice expounding his political philosophy.

In his way, Mr Dole revered Nixon. At the funeral here on 27 April 1994, he wept as he delivered a eulogy remembering "the greatest statesman of the second half of the 20th century". The two men were similar, both of humble origin, both overcame adversity. And right now in his difficult, perhaps already doomed quest for the White House, Mr Dole seems to be acting on one of the master's dicta, echoing forth from an old film clip: "If you risk nothing, you will lose nothing. But if you risk nothing, you will win nothing either."

If he is to win the presidency, Mr Dole must carry California. To do that, he must sweep Orange County and its communities like Yorba Linda. Democrats point to the place as home of some of the worst products of America - among them Nixon, John Wayne and Disneyland. For Republicans, however, Orange County is the ultimate stronghold, a seedbed of votes and conservative values first cultivated by Nixon, expanded by Ronald Reagan, only to be partly squandered by George Bush.

Like Orange County and all of southern California, Yorba Linda has changed utterly this century. Only 200 people lived there when Frank Nixon paid just over \$2,000 (£1,300) for nine acres of land, in the dream of growing a citrus orchard. The venture failed for want of wa-



California dreaming: Bob Dole (upper left) talks with the audience after his speech at Riverside. Photograph: AFP

ter. Today the community is home to 50,000, a suburban Utopia of brilliant green lawns, courtesy of the miracles of modern irrigation.

But for all its creature comforts, Orange County thinks of itself as ordinary heartland USA. It believes in patriotism and the gritty, old-fashioned work ethic of people like Nixon's father. Every hour from

somewhere within the presidential library complex a clock chimes "God Bless America". It could be a summons to the "silent majority" Richard Nixon once so skillfully identified, in Orange County and beyond.

Now as he seeks to rouse those same troops, Mr Dole is taking his mentor's advice. "If you thought I was tough last night, that was just a warm-up,"

he told an enthusiastic crowd at Riverside, the day after his combative performance in the second presidential debate on Wednesday, Riverside, 50 miles east of Los Angeles, is the sort of swing community Mr Dole must carry. At that moment too his wife Elizabeth was spreading the word in North California, while a heavy Dole advertising blitz was about to hit

the airwaves. After weeks of wavering, Dole is gambling all on the Golden State.

As of now he is still well behind - by 10 points in one poll, by 12 in another. If Bill Clinton loses votes to the consumer rights advocate, Ralph Nader, who is on the ballot as a Green Party candidate, Mr Dole will lose at least as many to Ross Perot. But California alone rep-

resents 54 electoral college votes, a fifth of the 2 quired to win. So California.

Unfortunately here, not even Orange County. As Mr Dole was in Rm. Mr Clinton was addressing a enthusiastic rally of 10 people in Santa Ana. The poll shows the President leading among all voters in twenty by 43 to 41 per cent, and a few days before 30 promi state Republicans announce they were supporting Mr Co.

The reason, they said, was Mr Dole's oppor to abortion rights and gunrol, and his hostility to stravi-ronmental controls. Thnce may thrill Republican constituents elsewhere, not here. Mr Dole is seestiff and uninspiring. A ft explained: "He just isn't California sort of guy." The of thumb is that a victor-republican candidate mrry Orange County by 100 votes to offset the ened Democratic majority the San Francisco Bay areas Angeles. On present is, Mr Dole will be fortun win by a tenth of that.

Such doubts of could dot disturb the faithful. Is, in very conservative," s Naia Klugman, president the r-ba Linda Republicanism's association. "I'm alveryptimistic. A big surp is en-ing."

Pinned on the ws thn-ivation to the Caria te-publican party's le 196 victory rally on 5 Neber, but a better indication ie mod may have been a here irthe conservative Ora County Register, lamentir Dole's straying from the path: "What party does Dole belong to anyway?" is his problem even amterpublicans - too conscr for the moderates, too moe for the conservatives.

But Mr Dole can heart from another of is principles. Never quit former president declared: White House staff after hounced his resignation. "Gess only comes when you some knocks and disappoints." Knocks and disappoints probably await Dole, maybe even in Oracounty.

### significant shorts

#### France rings the telephone changes

France's phone company introduced new 10-digit numbers last night. At 11pm, the country was adding two digits to every number, expanding its capacity by hundreds of millions of lines for an explosion of modems, faxes and cell phones in the coming years. The move cost state-owned France Telecom Fr5bn (£65m). AP - Paris

#### Belgian king speaks out

King Albert II of Belgium called for "a profound change in our country" after countless errors in a child murder and porn investigation created a public outrage. He spoke against a backdrop of spontaneous protests as tens of thousands turned out for a fifth day running to demand a clean-up of a justice system. AP - Brussels

#### Briton on rape charge

A 45-year-old Briton pleaded innocent to charges he raped the 11-year-old daughter of his Filipino girlfriend, Albert Wilson of Kent is alleged to have raped the girl at home while the mother was out shopping. T AP - Manila

#### Corsican group threat to Juppé

A Corsican nationalist organisation that has admitted responsibility for planting bombs in mainland France over the past two weeks has threatened the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, personally. In a letter sent to French state television, the FLNC (historic wing), spoke of "a response of an unsuspected magnitude" if Mr Juppé made "any attempt to eliminate the group physically". The letter made clear that the move was a response to a decision to institute proceedings against members of the FLNC. Mary Dejevsky - Paris

#### Price on Nazi camp doctor

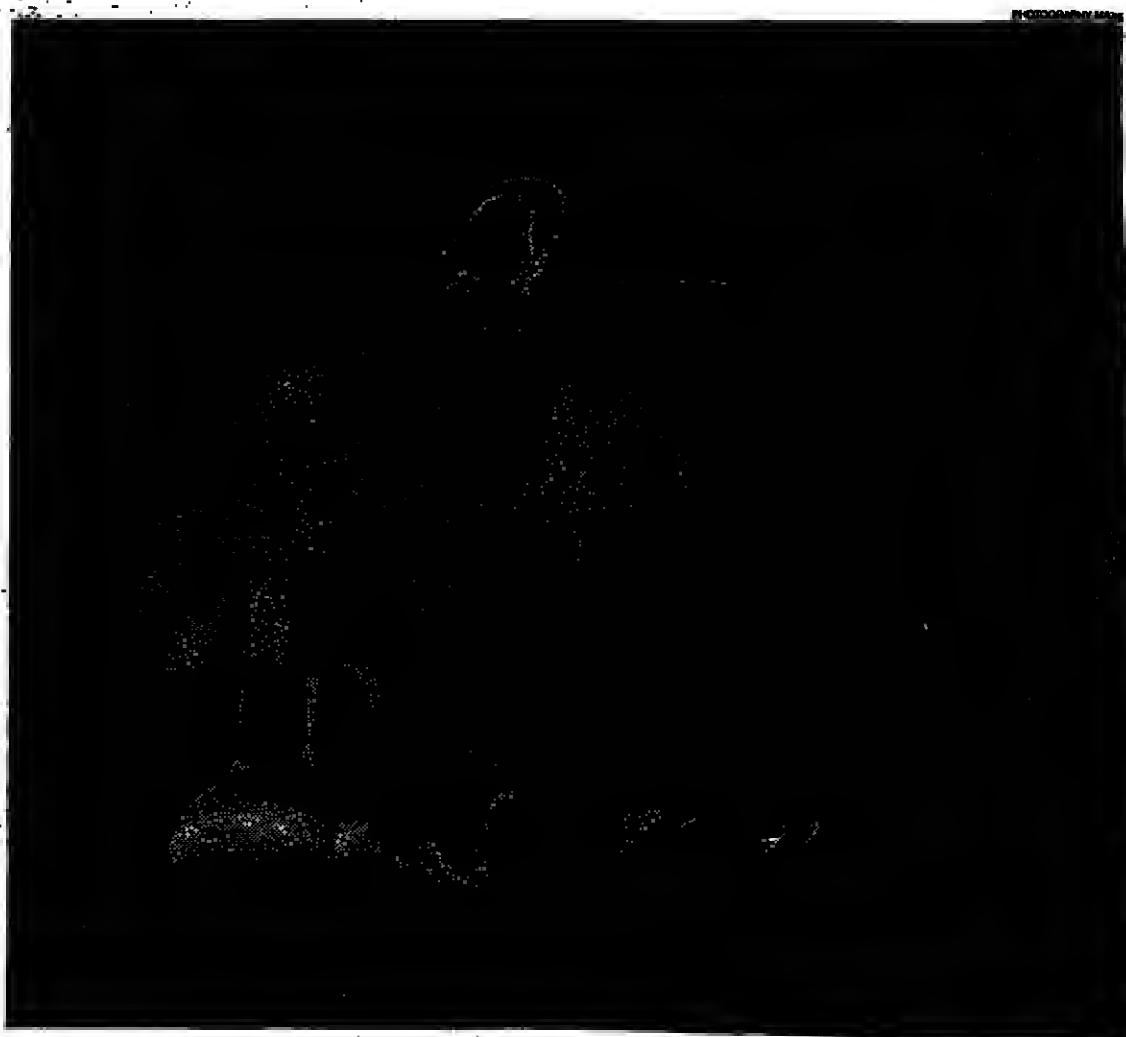
Prosecutors offered a 250,000 mark (£120,000) reward for a former SS doctor suspected of murdering hundreds of Jews at Mauthausen concentration camp in 1941. Fugitive Aribert Heim, 82, is suspected of using injections to the heart to murder Jewish inmates while he was a doctor at the camp in Austria. AP - Stuttgart

#### Taiwan power protest

Anti-nuclear protesters hurled petrol bombs barricades after parliament voted to restore funding for Taiwan's controversial fourth nuclear power station. Reuters - Taipei

#### Fur flies in Australia

Australian animal rights groups were outraged at a plan by legislator Richard Evans to free the country of cats by 2020, to save wildlife. He said scientists should introduce a disease to kill wild cats and pet cats should be neutered. AP - Canberra



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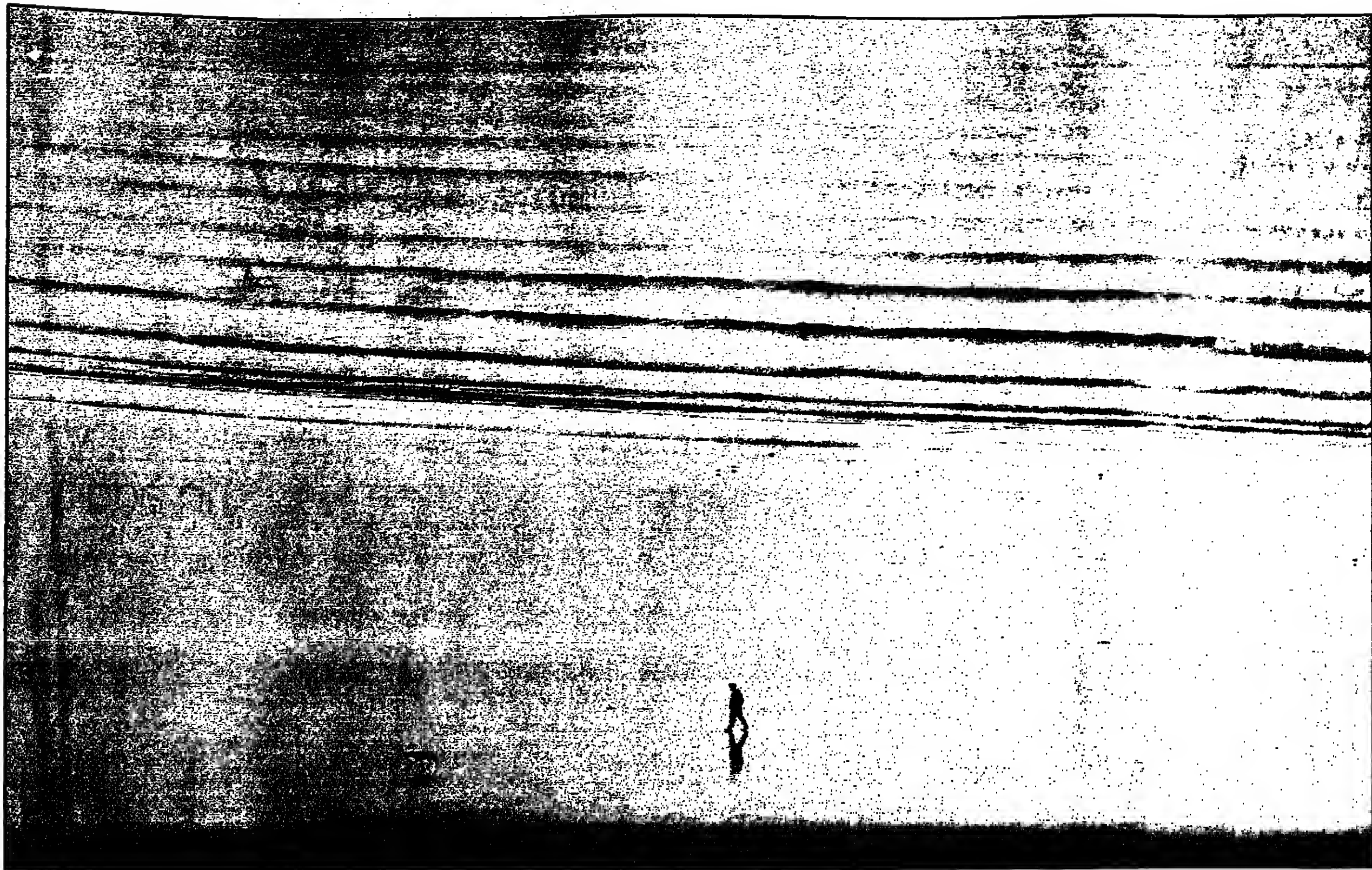
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This picture overlooking Saunton Sands, North Devon, was taken by John Voos with a Nikon FM2 camera on Kodak Ektachrome 100 ASA film.



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 1996

This week, crisp blue, almost-summer weather began to give way to the foul, wet blasts of nearly-winter. Compared to only a few weeks ago, much of the coast seems suddenly deserted, eerily beautiful, reclaimed by dog-walkers and seabirds. For those outdoor types prepared to search out the smell and colour of rural autumn, we bring news of good walking in deepest Shropshire. And for shuddering urbanites there's a feast of Bridget Jones.

## interview



### John Walsh meets Jeremy Clarkson

Cars, camshafts and the chaplain's daughter: TV's Mr Motoring drives and tells

page 3

Kerber's week . . . . . 2  
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## arts & books



### At last ... complete and unexpurgated

Exclusive excerpts from the new book based on the diaries of Bridget Jones

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Theatre review . . . . . 6  
Shelf life . . . . . 6  
TV & radio reviews . . . 7

## travel



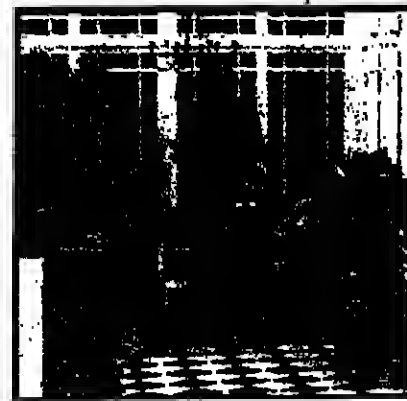
### Washington: the political theme park

US Capital comes alive only every fourth year when gripped by election fever

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Skiing . . . . . 15  
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## money



### Are you losing out on your mortgage?

Part two of our personal finance investigation into the way we invest our cash

page 24

Property . . . . . 20  
Shopping . . . . . 28  
Crossword . . . . . 31

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	£10,000	116.03	139.89	219.30	129.56	158.67	245.82
13.9%	£8,000	102.08	120.22	182.70	114.33	134.65	204.82
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# Whatever happened to Salmonella enteritidis?

**The moment:** On a freezing cold December Saturday, an ITN news team caught up with Edwina Currie. Against a backdrop of a council estate in Cheltenham, near Derby, she declared: "Most of the egg production in this country, sadly, is now infected with salmonella."

**The background:** Ms Currie was the junior health minister, hated by many for her ambition (and her refusal to keep it hidden) and blunt way with words – such as that Northerners died of "crisps and ignorance", and that cervical cancer was the result of being "far too sexually active" – and she got it. Somehow, though, she always survived. In the summer, a report landed on her desk about a problem with hens. In November, a hospital decided not to provide raw eggs to patients. Richard Lacey was a microbiologist working at Leeds University who



had grown interested in food quality. Few beyond his university had heard of him, though. Salmonella enteritidis was just what it had been for millions of years – a bacterium which lived on uncooked food and thrived in the human gut, given half a chance, with symptoms ranging from diarrhoea to death.

**The effect:** Though Ms Currie was able to withstand the farm lobby for a week, she couldn't withstand the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as well. Two weeks after her statement, she resigned, leaving the government with the problem of what to do with £10m of unsold eggs which were effectively left all over its collectively responsible face. For Ms Currie was right: eggs were a prime suspect in a widespread outbreak of salmonella, although the Egg Industry Council said it was implicated in only 26 of 36,000 reported cases of food poisoning.

Professor Lacey achieved widespread media visibility as a commentator on salmonella (which declined to be interviewed) and its drastic effects, which can include death. Salmonella became a byword for the dangers in our food.

**Moments of subsequence:** Ms Currie has never returned to the government benches, but instead has turned her hand to annoying party colleagues in other ways, such as being pro-European and writing sex 'n' Select Committee novels about fictional goings-on in the Commons – detailing activities that *The Sun* would call "steamy" but MPs would think too normal.

Professor Lacey warned against the dangers of "cook-chill" supermarket foods, and how they could not kill bacteria; and that microwaving could cause the production of dangerous chemicals on the surface of foods. Most recently, he has warned of a coming epidemic of CJD among Britons which he says will have been caused by eating BSE-infected food products. Salmonella enteritidis, even without a safe political seat, a book agent or university tenure, has proved to be a similarly doughy survivor. It still kills about 50 people a year; in September, a 49-year-old mother died after three weeks of painful illness, caused by licking a cake mix she had made which contained raw egg. Her husband and two sons ate the cake and lived.

Charles Arthur

## Kerber's week

AT HOME WITH PAULA AND MICHAEL:



## heavenly Sleaze written in the stars

The Roman naturalist Pliny described eclipses as "the most marvellous and indeed portentous occurrence in the whole of our observation of nature". Even a few centuries ago, in the wake of last Saturday's eclipse we would all have spent this week scanning the headlines for signs of catastrophe. As to who would reap the particular whirlwind, eclipses have a long tradition of creating problems for rulers. That this solar eclipse occurred in the 30-degree portion of the sky assigned to Libra, the sign opposing John Major's sun in Aries, would have undoubtedly been remarked upon.

The Prime Minister's opponents uniting in accusations of sleaze would be put down to the effects of sun and moon conjoined in his opposite sign. The possibility of Neil Hamilton's resignation cutting Major's razor thin majority even



thinner, plus Speaker Boothroyd's forceful interventions and ex-whip David Willet's scandalous ones, would not be viewed as just another chapter in an ongoing saga. Instead this week's events would be seen as certain harbingers of Government doom. All this was brought to mind by my participation in a programme on eclipses on Radio 4 last Saturday. The other commentators were a scientist and a psychologist. The producer, being more accustomed to television, told me I was included as the "illustration", which could perhaps be translated as the comic relief since the

programme was *Science Now*. During times of *Science Then*, the English were seen as susceptible to prodigies of all kinds.

Thomas Sprat, in his 1667 *History of the Royal Society*, complained, "This wild amazing of men's minds, with prodigies and conceits of Providences... is a vanity to which the English seem to have been always subject above others. There is scarce any Modern Historian that relates our Foreign Wars, but he has this Objection against the disposition of our Countrymen, that they used to order their affairs of the greatest importance according to some obscure Omens or predictions that passed amongst them."

A solar eclipse for 29 March 1652 – Black Monday – seemed calculated to drive all Britons into a frenzy. Among the dire predictions were darkness, sudden death and the end of monarchy. At Dalkeith the poor threw away their possessions, while in London anyone rich enough loaded their coaches and fled. The diarist John Evelyn noted that the alarm was so great "hardly any would work,

none stir out of their houses, so ridiculously were they abused by knavish and ignorant stargazers".

The Council of State issued a pamphlet insisting that eclipses were natural events and could have no political effects. When the day dawned fine and clear and nothing terrible ensued, astrologers – like acolytes of any revealed religion – were not short of excuses. For the omen tradition of eclipses looked to the duration as well as the location of the eclipse for its time-frame of prediction. Last week's eclipse lasted for three hours, representing three years during which we will feel its effects.

When the sun is eclipsed, so is the ruler's power. Perhaps Conservative Central Office might issue a pamphlet assuring us all is well, although Major may yet remain resilient since this eclipse was merely partial. The coming total eclipse over Cornwall in 1999 could prove more intractable. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle highlights more than one ruler, including the King of Kent, who met his end during the same year as an eclipse. Were I the King of Cornwall, I should look to my future.

Ann Geneva

## earthly An idyll fit for idiots

There is a country we all know, but few have visited. It shares the same space as America, but in a parallel universe. It's called TV-Movieland. You might want to live there. Everyone who does, after all, has a front drive, an *en suite* bathroom and separate phone lines for teenagers. It's a consumer utopia, where success also means understanding.

You know TV-Movieland. You've seen the brochures. It's the place where moms run up porch steps hugging brown paper shopping bags from the tops of which plumes of celery protrude. Where each unmarried woman has a media career and a warehouse flat with exposed girders and giant abstract oils on the staircase. There are no bungalows here, no overflowing dustbins and no leaves on the line. It's where romantic dinners consist of spaghetti and women like salad.

This is the country where



everyone has a disabled friend, where minority groups are the bringers of wisdom: Old people, Chinese junk-shop owners, people who mend cars, women who pour the coffee in diners; wherever you turn, there's someone waiting to offer advice or baby-sit. This is the place where parents apologise when they're in the wrong and adolescents say things like, "I'm only upset because we never seem to spend enough time together". Sounds great, doesn't it? Well, don't be fooled. You may long for kitchen appliances that work, secretaries who type up annual reports overnight and a verandah with a swing seat, but these things come at a price. Beneath this

happy, ordered surface lies a wriggling, slimy can of worms.

Try this: go to a park. That dad-and-child combo by the climbing frames are guaranteed to be exchanging the following line: "You'll love Marcia. And now we're getting married we can be a family again". Each suburban celebration is disrupted when a rake-thin, lycra-clad lush falls off her spike heels while carrying a cake. Gay men only exist to stumble in on violent burglars. Representatives of religious groups are crypto-Nazis. Unless they're Catholic priests, in which case they have frank conversations about sex while strolling on docksides. Even the animals have alarming habits: there's never a dog that doesn't whine and wag its tail, never a horse that doesn't whinny when it appears. As for cats, they have only one function: to jump, yowling, out of dark places and make lone females scream.

This you see, is the murder capital of the world. Business deals in Jakartan penthouses are a doddle in comparison. No one here lies around watching soaps and thinking about vacuuming. It is a prerequisite of citizenship that you agree to be raped/slash/murdered/mown down by a drunk

driver, or find your parents/spouse/children raped/slash/murdered. Dawn breaks to the sound of women saying "I woke up in a panic because I'd forgotten to pack his lunch, and then I remembered..."

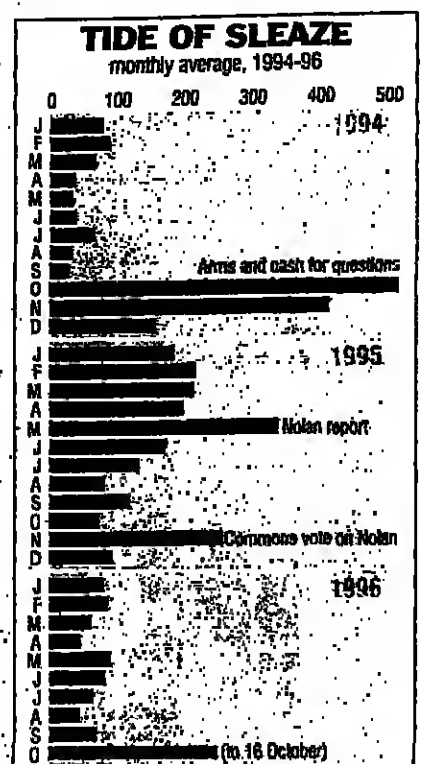
As with most countries, there are specific rules for women: *The Lonely Planet Guide* keeps forgetting to include them, but they must be strictly observed. Never shoot with your eyes open. If you shoot with your eyes open, you'll miss. Don't run into the street when there's a windowless attic to hide in. And – this is most important – only check out late-night noises harfoot, in a nightie, without turning on the lights.

Sounds bad, I know, but if you follow a few basic rules, you'll not only survive, you'll be a better person. Firstly: never trust a man with a moustache. Always trust men with beards. Unless, that is, you're in woodland and they're wearing a plaid shirt. If your husband's dead, avoid your best friend. If your husband and best friend are staining the deep-pile, don't stand at the top of a cliff with the investigating top. Stick with these rules, and you'll do fine. Have a nice trip.

Serena Mackesy

## In addition

A tide of sleaze\* is engulfing the nation this month. Just as it did in October 1994 and in November 1995. The monthly totals of appearances of the word "sleaze" in our newspaper database (covering a wide selection of national dailies and Sundays) since the beginning of 1994 reveals both the seasonal nature of sleaze and the high prospects of a record crop this autumn.



As the table shows, sleaze was acceptably contained until the tidal wave of arms-for-Iraq and cash-for-questions stories in late 1994. The level remained high, peaking again with the publication of the Nolan Report (May 1995) and the Commons debate on Nolan (November 1995). After Nolan our appetite for sleaze appeared satiated and the figures for the early months of 1996 give the impression of a general sleaze moratorium. Indeed, the total number of sleaze appearances in the first nine months of the year was 63 per cent down on the same period in 1995. This month, however, the cease-sleaze has come to an end. With 249 instances in the first 16 days of October, it will take only one more major scandal to surpass the high sleaze mark of October 1994. \*Sleaze, a back formation from the far older sleazy, with a first citation date in the OED of 1967. Sleazy dates back to 1670 in the form *Sleazy* or *Sleazy*, meaning inferior fabric from Silesia. The meaning generalised from shabby cloth to shabby standards in general.

William Hartston

## weekend weather

**The British Isles**

**General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:**  
A developing depression will move northeast towards Ireland with fronts moving east across the British Isles. Today, Scotland will get a mix of sunshine and showers with a brisk westerly wind. Most of the showers are going to be to the north, and over the islands, but rain will spread into the southwest. Northern Ireland is going to get some rain and a freshening southwest wind after a bright start. The whole of England and Wales will get some sunshine with a moderate westerly breeze. There are, though, going to be a few light showers dotted about while cloudier weather and rain spreads from the west.

Sunday will see rain and gusty winds in the north, but with showers to come. The south will be brighter and milder, but with rain spreading from the west. Much of the UK will see sunshine and showers on Monday with a gusty westerly wind, but there will be rain to the south. The rain will work its way north during Tuesday along with strengthening southwest winds. Wednesday should then see the rain clearing to sunshine and showers with gusty winds.

Location	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Abereid	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Anglesey	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Ayr	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Belfast	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Birmingham	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Blackpool	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Bournemouth	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Brighton	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Bristol	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Cardiff	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Carlisle	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Dover	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Dublin	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Edinburgh	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Exeter	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Glasgow	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Guernsey	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Inverness	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Ipswich	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Isles of Scilly	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Jersey	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Liverpool	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Lizard	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
London	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Manchester	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Newcastle	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Nottingham	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Oxford	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Plymouth	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Ronalds	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Scarborough	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Southampton	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Stirling	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Stranraer	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Tiree	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
York	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

**Europe and The World**

WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT): c, cloudy; f, fog; r, rain; sn, snow; s, sunny; th, thunder \*previous day's figure at local time

Location	Temp	Wind	Clouds	Other
Alicante	26	79		
Amsterdam	12	54		
Athens	23	73		
Auckland	17	63		
Bahrein	31	88		
Bangkok	23	88		
Barcelona	21	68		
Belnet	25	84		
Belgrade	18	64		
Berlin	13	55		
Birmm	19	66		
Bombay	13	51		
Bordeaux	19	66		
Brussels	23	73		
Budapest	13	55		
Bucharest	13	55		
Buenos Aires	14	57		
Budapest	14	57		
Cairo	33	91		
Cape Town	24	75		
Christchurch	15	59		
Cologne	12	54		
Copenhagen	13	55		
Corfu	20	68		
Dhahran	27	81		
Florence	18	64		
Geneva	11	52		
Gibraltar	25	77		
Helsinki	7	45		
Hong Kong	22	84		
Islamabad	28	82		
Jerusalem	28	82		
Johannesburg	26	79		
Karachi	27	81		
Kathmandu	25	77		
Kiev	11	52		
Las Palmas	25	77		
Lisbon	21	70		
Madrid	18	64		
Malaga	22	72		
Malta	22	72		
Mamila	30	86		
Milan	15	59		
Montevideo	25	77		
Moscow	9	48		
Munich	10	50		
New Delhi	31	88		
Ole	10	50		
Paris	14	57		
Prague	9	48		
Rome	19	66		
Stockholm	11	52		
Strasbourg	13	55		
Sydney	20	68		
Tunis	23	73		
Vladivostok	13	55		
Zurich	11	52		

**Road and Rail**

Road: M5 Glasgow J11 Queenslie (B765) Steps Road interchange) major roadworks, closed westbound. Contraflow eastbound. Expect serious delays. M25 Surrey between J6 Goldstone interchange (A22/B2235) and J10 Witley interchange (A3), roadworks contraflow. 50mph speed limit will cause peak time delays in both directions. A38 Cornwall Trerhew near Liskeard. Contraflow will cause long delays. A1 Durham. Between A1 (M) J61 Bowburn (A177/A689/B6261 Durham Services) and A1 (M) J60 Sedgefield (A689 Bradbury), contraflow with two lanes southbound and one lane northbound. Expect delays.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch on 0838 483 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 46p per min (includes 50p per min for all other times) the VAT.

**Air Quality**

Location	NO <sub>2</sub>	SO <sub>2</sub>
London	Good	Good
S. England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good

**Outlook for Today**

Location	Good	Good
London	Good	Good
S. England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good

**High Tides**

Location	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	6:45	8:2	12:18	8:2
Liverpool	4:17	8:2	12:46	8:2
Bristol	12:19	11:2	00:48	8:2
Hull (Albert Dock)	11:37	6:5	23:54	6:4
Glasgow	3:24	3:2	17:46	3:2
Dun Laoghaire	4:54	3:7	17:16	3:8

**The Sky at Night**

**Position of Saturn relative to the moon**

23rd October

24th October

MOON

SATURN

Anyone up and around in the small hours of Monday or Tuesday morning next week could spot meteors from the Orionid shower. At its peak, this regular annual shower can produce a shooting star every two or three minutes. Each blazing trail in our atmosphere marks the final demise of a dust fragment that dropped off Halley's Comet long ago. Accumulated streams of dust chase this most famous of comets as it takes its extended course round the Sun.

Twice a year, Earth ploughs through the trail of interplanetary debris, giving us the Orionids in late October and a meteor shower known as the Eta Aquarids in early May.

Shower meteors seem to come from one particular point in the sky. The constellation in which this point lies gives the shower its name. Apart from such regular showers, miscellaneous bits and pieces from space can enter the atmosphere at any time, creating a brief, fiery trail in the sky. Sometimes, they are big enough to survive the ordeal and land on Earth as meteorites.

Also this week, look for the planet Saturn, a bright object near the almost full Moon on Wednesday and Thursday evening.

**Sun and Moon**

Location	Sun rises	Sun sets	Moon rises	Moon sets
London	7:31am	5:58pm	2:15pm	11:43pm
Glasgow	7:31am	5:58pm	2:15pm	11:43pm

Something worth talking about.

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مكتبة من الأصل





John Walsh  
meets...  
Jeremy  
Clarkson

# Man of the gear



Keith Doherty

Outside Charlbury Station, Jeremy Clarkson is waiting in a classic pose: leaning against an automobile, arms folded, one hand occasionally raising a cigarette to his lips, the long vertical of his 6ft 5in frame bisecting the gleaming horizontal of the car, man and machine, you see, in sacred conjunction. It's the look Bruce Springsteen chose for the cover of his *Tunnel of Love* album, complete with cowboy hat and bootlace tie. Mr Clarkson has not selected either accessory today, but both the cowboy hat and the folded arms can be found on the cover of *Jeremy Clarkson's Motorworld*, a handsome book published to tie in with last year's 12-part dash round a dozen countries that topped BBC2's ratings.

The only trouble is that the car against which he is leaning is a Nissan Primera – and long-standing fans of *Top Gear's* corkscrew-barnetted Wild Man will know that Nissan drivers are one of Clarkson's many *bêtes noires*. ("They can't park, don't understand roundabouts and are not averse, once in a while, to driving the wrong way down a motorway"). A man of strong but mysterious opinions, he also nurses a chronic dislike of foreigners (especially the Welsh and the Swiss), Colin Welland, the World Bank, travelling salesmen (especially of photocopyers), homosexuals, political correctness and his own feet. But as we career through the Oxfordshire lanes, it becomes clear that the Nissan is only a loan, for purposes of review, which Mr Clarkson duly supplies: "The most ordinary, depressingly dull corporate junk, although actually there's an inherent niceness about its steering and its responses".

Sitting in the driver's seat, he is a bulky, looming presence, that huge pink slab of a head surmounted by a tangle of curls, which seem to be associated with it without actually growing from it, like lichen on a boulder. It's very familiar, because of Mr Clarkson's extraordinary broadcast style. His *Top Gear* performance is full of in-your-face gurning and vast facial close-ups, whiskered confidences and over-the-shoulder chat, beery puns and breezy one-liners: "So the question is," he summed up last Thursday's critique of the new Ford Ka, "if you drive this, will people want to have your babies, or will they laugh in your face?"

Sex and cars have been mentioned in the same breath ever since the Model-T Ford acquired adjustable seating, but in Clarkson they sometimes seem interchangeable. His appreciation of cars goes beyond horsepower, big ends and rocker panels, into darker realms of attraction and desire. *V2* comic featured Mr Clarkson performing sex with a "Ferrari Testosterone" with "Yeah, take that you sexy bitch, it's hard...". His image has gradually coarsened, over his seven years with *Top Gear*, from an enthusiastic impresario of speeding chrome to the shambolic xenophobe, drinking 'n' smoking figure of Super-Lad.

At the Clarkson home – a Georgian mansion once owned by David Sainsbury – we parked beside his beloved Jaguar. I blinked at the sight of the rest of the Clarkson stable – an Austin Maestro, a Citroën Passat – in a corner. "One is the cleaner, the other's the nanny," said Jeremy. "Doo! jump to conclusions." Clarkson moved here last year with his dark and pretty wife Francie (who doubles as his manager) and their children Emily (two) and Finlo (seven months; the name is Manx, like Francie), though they still return to their Fulham flat at the smallest pretext. In their Provencal kitchen, Jeremy makes coffee while Francie fields phone calls from Birmingham, the site of this week's Motor Show. Everyone from the City Council to the *Evening Star* is up in arms about Jeremy's recent description of the nation's second city as "a rugby team's bath after they have let the water out" – i.e. a circle of scum with nothing at the centre.

Did he mind upsetting people? "Oh, of course. Sometimes you think, 'Oh dear, I've hurt someone and that's awful.' But then you have a drink and forget about it." He is looking forward to Birmingham, his interest in the Motor Show undimmed by familiarity. "I love the glitz and glamour of it. You must remember that after arms and legitimate drugs, the motor industry is the third biggest in the world and

when it fluffs up its feathers and puts on a show it can look... pretty good." The days of draping babes across bonnets had gone, though? "It's not just that. The trade's been very depressed for the past few years, because of all this nonsense about pollution and the need for electric cars. And the motor industry, instead of flexing its enormous muscles and flexing back, has kowtowed and made these tedious little cars. But they're pretty well gone away, and it's all back to power and fun and games, and putting girls..."

Despite his Little Englandism (the *Motorworld* programme amounted to a dozen flights of cultural stereotyping, with some cars attached) he is slavishly devoted to Italian cars, especially Ferraris, his pride and joy is a Pirelli Ferrari 355 in screaming scarlet, which he went so far as to buy at his price. Though nervous about people knowing he's got one, he proudly shows off its smooth lines and blood-and-cream interior to appreciative strangers. When, later, his wife offered me a lift in it, his face became all concern; he looked a far cry from the chap who disparages the environmental lobby, suggests, on-air, the the speed limit should be 140 mph and radiates cheeky don't-give-a-shit amorality.

Talking to him about cars is a curious experience. Starting from a position of ignorance – I'm the kind of driver who assumes "overhead camshafts" are things you have to duck to avoid when leaving the passenger seat – I was prepared to be blinded by the automotive equivalent of a wine snob. Not a bit of it. Clarkson off-camera is the same as on, reducing complicated machines to simple metaphorical propositions. Thus he likes Jaguars because "people say there's not much space in there, that you're hemmed in, but I think it makes you feel very cosy and safe". Like being in a cockpit? "No, more like being in a little study with a wood-burning stove. There should be a few books on the walls..."

The other thing he does is wax

hyper-precise about some tiny detail of a car as if to suggest, by synecdoche, the wondrousness of the whole. He will, for instance, bang on for ages about the Ferrari's gear lever. "It's a beautiful piece of sculpture. Course the Italians have an eye for making things beautiful, rather than strictly functional..." Come off it, Jeremy, I said, there's a gear lever in my Rover which is gorgeous, too, if we're going to write like art critics about it, a

majority of people who buy cars care a goat's what is under the bonnet. Just so long as, when they pull out to overtake a tractor, they'll go faster than the tractor."

Did he really not know how an engine works? "I really don't. I've tried over the years to understand the basics of internal combustion – how the spark plug has a spark and ignites the fuel mixture and there's this piston somehow turns this rod which turns the gear lever which

corridors. And that's why I took this conscious effort to be Jack the Lad, to drink and smoke, so that way you could stand out." He considered the glowing tip of his Marlboro Red. "It was the best decision of my life. Smoking is just fantastic. I love it." Reptoo, though – didn't that make him more of a Posh Git than a Boy Racer? He bridled. "Well, I did get expelled." What for? "It was a whole series of misdemeanours, best summed up by the headmaster

Rotherham Advertiser as a trainee. It lasted until his cervice broke one day when covering a Ponies and Produce local show. "I had all the Pony Club mothers giving me earache about how 'Well, she shouldn't have been in that class, so she shouldn't have won'. I'd been hearing how somebody cheated with his marrow and someone else's apples came from Sainsbury's and they hadn't grown them at all, and then the Pony Club mothers... That's what made me do it. I picked up my typewriter in the Press tent at the Wyckersley Show and shouted 'Enough!'. I thought, there must be something better than this out in the big wide world..."

And there was, and it was called cars. Before buying his first car – a Ford Scirocco – Clarkson leafed through the available car magazines, "and they were all, like *What Car?*, this incredibly tedious line-up of facts and details. I wasn't interested in that. I wanted to know, as I cruise down Doncaster High Street, am I going to look good in this car or not? I didn't give a shit about headroom and boot-sills. And it made me start thinking: I wonder if you could write about cars in a different way?"

But look, I said, you're 6ft 5in. You're far too tall to drive a Scirocco with its streamlined ceiling. Maybe if you'd trusted the boring details, you wouldn't have had excruciating neckache for years... "Well, yeah, I was desperately uncomfortable in it, and the clutch cable used to saw through the bulkhead and break – but it didn't matter because it was such a lovely car. You'd walk up to it after you'd been shopping, and look at it and go, 'You're magnificent.' We're back in V2 country, it seems. I lack the nerve to ask him if he's ever tried to mate with one of his high-performance charges, though I remember his telling *Q* magazine, on the subject of sexual arousal, "I don't actually swell. There's oo swelling when I climb into a car, unlike if I was, say, climbing into Claudia Schiffer. Driving a Fer-

rari isn't as good as bedding Kate Moss, but it's oot far off. I imagine." Gosh, what a naughty boy. Having almost exhausted the excitement potential of everything on four wheels – he's doing 57 *Top Gear* programmes this year, Clarkson is now embarked on a new venture, provisionally entitled *Jeremy Clarkson Unlimited*, which he has just started shooting in the States. "The basic premise is, if it rolls, floats, flies, shoots a big bullet, runs on high explosive or gasoline, then we feature it. It's kind of *Beyond the Dodge Viper* – that was as exciting as cars get, but not as exciting as motorised transport gets. We'll be doing helicopters, gunships, powerboats... It should be called *Big Boys Toys*. "Will he be taking the wheel of them all?" "Er, no, I can't fly – though I did go on a powerboat once. The most extraordinary experience. I find it hard to talk about it. I mean it can go from nought to 100 in three seconds. It can generate 4G in a turn. You can't see how half an inch of plywood hull in the water can provide enough grip to make your face get all twisted up..."

Mr Clarkson is deliriously entertaining company and a straight talker of refreshingly unambiguous views, but he is, of course, a big kid surrounded by birthday presents supplied gratis to the Corporation by the car companies. His role is to find an heroic voice for the commuter who drives his purple Mondeo to the supermarket on Saturdays. Was there any distant maturity in sight for the horsepower-loving Super-Lad? "Well there is a temptation – it starts out with a Mild Lad, then Laddism catches on and you get loaded and *Men Behaving Badly*, and you're on the crest of this Lad wave and in order to stay in front you're sometimes tempted to go mad and say stupid things. But you have to be aware that there are limits. If someone could provide a direct link between something I'd said and someone getting *really* hurt, things might be different. But until then..."

When he said, "If you'd come up to me on the first day and punched me in the face, I'd have expelled you instantly. And if you'd come up and gone like *this* [he gives my arm a light poke], I'd have been mildly irritated. But the thing is, you've been doing that [nasty prod] and that [nastier prod] and that [dirt] for five years. Now get out." But what was the final indignity? Drugs? Guns? Sex? "There was no one big thing. I'd worked my way through the rule book, breaking them one by one, but there was no calamitous moment when I was caught in flagrante with the chaplain's daughter. Mostly it was not being there. I was more interested in the local girl's school. Shall I do my history prep or shall I go and see Sally Ann?"

Told by a Doncaster neighbour that the only fate of the expelled is to become journalists, he joined the

"Quentin Willson told me when he was 17 he was stripping down a Ford Anglia on his parents' kitchen table. I said, 'Quentin, when I was 17, I was getting laid'"

lovely fat, solid piece of – "Plastic," said Clarkson crushingly. "Or wood veneer, which is the same thing. The Ferrari gear lever is a perfect aluminium ball. They use a diamond cutter to carve the map of the gears. It's something you could take out of the car and Stephen Bayley would have it in the Design Museum. Now take the petrol filler cap on the Fiat Coupé..."

It seemed odd that he over-discussed the minutiae of car technology, the anarchy world of torque ratios and the like. This is because he hasn't a clue what they mean. "Yeah, people are always keen to talk about that stuff, particularly the Germans. They love the details. They love to get you down and say, 'Look at our new track rod end. Have you ever seen anything like it?' And I say, sorry, I don't think it's very important. I don't think the vast

majority of people who buy cars care a goat's what is under the bonnet. Just so long as, when they pull out to overtake a tractor, they'll go faster than the tractor."

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# 8st (bad); chocolate 4 (bad); cigarettes 3 (vg)...

## Sunday 15 January

6pm: Completely exhausted by entire day of date-preparation. Being a woman is worse than being a farmer. There is so much harvesting and crop spraying to be done: legs to be waxed, underarms shaved, eyebrows plucked, feet pedicured, skin exfoliated and moisturised, spots cleansed, roots dyed, eyelashes tinted, nails filed, cellulite massaged, stomach muscles exercised. The whole performance is so highly tuned you only need to neglect it for a few days for the whole thing to go to seed. Sometimes I wonder what I would be like if left to revert to nature – with a full beard and handkerchief moustache on each shin, Denis Healey eyebrows, face a graveyard of dead skin cells, spots erupting, long curly fingernails like Struwwelpeter, blind as bat and stupid round of species as no contact lenses, flabby body flobbering around.

7pm: Cannot believe this has happened. On the way to the bathroom, to complete final farming touches, I noticed the Ansafone light was flashing. Daniel.

"Look, Jones. I'm really sorry. I think I'm going to have to give tonight a miss. I've got a presentation at 10 in the morning and a pile of 45 spreadsheets to get through."

Cannot believe it. Am stood up. Entire waste of whole day's bloody effort and hydro-electric body-generated power. However, one must not live one's life through men but must be complete in oneself as a woman of substance.

9pm: Still, he is in top-level job. Maybe he didn't want to ruin first date with underlying work-panic.

11pm: Humph. He might have bloody well rung again, though. Is probably out with someone thinner.

5am: What's wrong with me? I'm completely alone. Hate Daniel. Cleave. Am going to have nothing more to do with him. Am going to get weighed.

## Monday 16 January

9st 2 (from where? why? why?); alcohol units 0; cigarettes 20; calories 1500; positive thoughts 0.

10.30am, office: Daniel is still locked in his meeting. Maybe it was a genuine excuse.

1pm: Just saw Daniel leaving for lunch. He has not messaged me or anything. Depressed. Going shopping.

11.50pm: Just had dinner in Harvey Nichols Fifth Floor with Tom, who was obsessing about a pretentious-sounding "freelance film maker" called Jerome. Moaned to him about Daniel, who was in meetings all afternoon and only managed to say, "Hi, Jones, how's the skirt?" at 4.30pm. Tom said not to be paranoid, give it time, but I could tell he was not concentrating and only wanted to talk about Jerome as suffused with sex-lust.

## Tuesday 24 January

Heaven-sent day. At 5.30pm, like a gift from God, Daniel appeared, sat himself on the edge of my desk, with his back to Perpetua, took out his diary and murmured, "How are you fixed for Friday?"

Yessssss! Yessssss!

## Friday 27 January

9st 3 (but stuffed with Genoum food); alcohol units 8; cigarettes 400 (feels like); calories 875.

Huh. Had dreamt date at an intimate little Genoum restaurant near Daniel's flat.

"Um ... right. I'll get a taxi." I hurried awkwardly as we stood in the street afterwards. Then he lightly brushed a hair from my forehead, took my check in his hand and kissed me, urgently, desperately. After a while he held me hard against him and whispered throatily, "I don't think you'll be needing that taxi, Jones."

The second we were inside his flat we fell upon each other like beasts: shoes, jackets strewn in a trail across the room.

"I don't think this skirt's looking at all well," he murmured. "I think it should lie down on the floor." As he started to undo the zip he whispered, "This is just a bit of fun, OK? I don't think we should start getting involved." Then, caved in place, he carried on with the zip. Had it not been for Sharon and the fuckwittage and that I'd just drunk the best part of a bottle of wine, I would have sunk powerless into his arms. As it was, I leapt to my feet, pulling up my skirt. "That is just such crap," I slurred. "How dare you be so fraudulently flirtatious, cowardly and dysfunctional? I am not interested in emotional fuckwittage. Goodbye."

It was great. You should have seen his face. But now I am home I am sunk into gloom. I may have been right, but my reward, I know, will be to end up all alone, half-eaten by an Alsatian.

## Monday 13 February

Midnight: Ugh. Completely exhausted. Surely it is not normal to be revising for a date as if it were a job interview? Suspect Daniel's enormously well read brain may turn out to be something of a nuisance if things develop. Maybe I should have fallen for someone younger and mindless who would cook for me, wash all my clothes and agree with everything I say.

Since leaving work I have nearly slipped a disc, wobbling through a step aerobics class, scratched my naked body for seven minutes with a stiff brush; cleaned the flat; filled the fridge; plucked my eyebrows, skimmed the papers and the *Ultimate Sex Guide*, put the washing in and waxed my own legs, since it was too late to book an appointment.

Ended up kneeling on a towel trying to pull off a wax strip firmly stuck to the back of my calf while watching *Newsnight* in an effort to drum up some interesting opinions about things. My back hurts, my head aches and my legs are bright red and covered in lumps of wax.

Wise people will say Daniel should like me just as I am, but I am a child of *Cosmopolitan* culture, have been traumatised by supermodels and too many quizzes and know that neither my personality nor my body is up to it if left to its own devices. I can't take the pressure. I am going to cancel and spend the evening eating doughnuts in a cardigan with egg on it.

## Saturday 25 February

8st 10 (miracle: sex proved indeed to be best form of exercise); alcohol units 0; cigarettes 0; calories 200 (at last have found the secret of not eating: simply replace food with sex).

6pm: Oh joy. Have spent the day in a state I can only describe as shag-drunkness, mooning about the flat, smiling, picking things up and putting them down again. It was so lovely. The only down points were 1) immediately it was over Daniel said, "Damn. I meant to take the car into the Citroën garage," and 2) when I got up to go to the bathroom he pointed out that I had a pair of tights stuck to the back of my calf.

But as the rosy clouds disperse, I begin to feel alarm. What now? No plans were made. Suddenly I realise I am waiting for the phone again. How can it be that the situation between the sexes after a first night remains so agonisingly unbalanced? Feel as if I have just sat an exam and must wait for my results.

## Friday 3 March

At 4.15 Sharon rang me in the office. "Are you coming out with me and Jude tomorrow?"

"Er ... I silently panicked, thinking, Surely Daniel will ask to see me this weekend before he leaves the office?"

"Call me if he doesn't ask," said Shazzer drily, after a pause.

At 5.45pm saw Daniel with his coat on heading out through the door. My traumatised expression must have shamed even him because he smiled shyly, nodded at the computer screen and shot out.

Sure enough, Message Pen d n g was flashing. I pressed RMS. It said:

Message Jones  
Have a good weekend. Pip pip.  
Cleave  
Miserably, I picked up the phone and dialled Sharon.

"What time are we meeting tomorrow?" I mumbled sheepishly.

"Eight thirty. Café Rouge. Don't worry, we love you. Tell him to bugger off from me. Emotional fuckwit."

2am: Argor swore at brilliant with Shazzer Jude. Dun stupid care bout Daniel stupid prat. Feel sick though. Oops.

## Sunday 5 March

8am: Ugh. Wish was dead. Am never, ever going to drink again for the rest of life.

8.30am: Oooh. Could really fancy some chips.

11.30am: Badly need water but seems better to keep eyes closed and head stationary on pillow so as not to disturb bits of machinery and pheasants in head.

5pm: Har har. Am marvellous. Feeling v pleased with self. Had top-level post-work crisis meeting in Café Rouge with Sharon, Jude and Tom, who were all delighted with the Daniel outcome, each convinced it was because I had followed their advice. Also Jude had heard survey on the radio that by the turn of the millennium a third of all households will be single, therefore proving that at last we are no longer tragic freaks. Shazzer guffawed and said, "One in three? Nine out of 10, more like."

Sharon maintains men – present company (ie Tom) excepted, obviously – are so catastrophically uninvolved that soon they will just be kept by women as pets for sex, therefore presumably these will not count as shared households as the men will be kept outside in kennels. Anyway, feeling v empowered. Tremendous. Think might read hit of Susan Faludi's *Backlash*.

5am: Oh God, am so unhappy about Daniel. I love him.

## Monday 20 March

9st; alcohol units 4 (getting into mood); cigarettes 27 (but last day before giving up); calories 2,455.

Have decided to serve the shepherd's pie with chargrilled Belgian endive salad, Roquefort lardons and frizzled chorizo, to add a fashionable touch (have not tried before but sure it will be easy), followed by individual Grand Marnier soufflés.

V much looking forward to the birthday. Expect to become known as brilliant cook and hostess.

## Tuesday 21 March: my birthday

9st; alcohol units 9; cigarettes 42; calories 4,295 (if can't splash out on birthday, when can I?)

6.30pm: Cannot go on. Have just stepped in a pan of mashed potato in new kitten-heel black suede shoes from Pied à Terre (Pied-a-Pomme-de-Terre, more like), forgetting that kitchen floor and surfaces were covered in pans of mince and mashed potato.

6.30pm: Already! Have to go out to Cullens for Grand Marnier soufflé ingredients and other forgotten items. Oh my God – suddenly remembered tube of contraceptive jelly may be on side of washbasin. Must also hide storage jars with embarrassing un-hip squirrel design and birthday card from Jamie with picture of little lamb on front which says "Happy Birthday. Guess which one is you?" Then inside, "You're the one over the hill." Humph.

Schedule:

6.30pm: Go to shop.

6.45pm: Return with forgotten groceries.

6.45-7pm: Assemble shepherd's pie and place in oven (oh God, hope will all fit).

7-7.05pm: Prepare Grand Marnier soufflés. (Actually think will have a little taste of Grand Marnier now. It is my birthday, after all.)

7.05-7.10pm: Mmm. Grand Marnier delicious – Check plates and cutlery for tell-tale signs of sluttish washing-up and arrange in attractive fan shape. Ah, must buy napkins also (or is it serviettes? Can never remember which one is common).

7.10-7.20pm: Tidy up and move furniture to sides of room.

7.20-7.30pm: Make frizz lardon frizzled chorizo thing.

All of which leaves a clear half-hour to get ready so no need to panic. Must have a fag. Aargh. It's quarter to seven. How did that happen? Aargh.

7.15pm: Just got back from shop and realise have forgotten butter.

7.35pm: Shift, shift shit. The shepherd's pie is still in pans all over the kitchen floor and have not yet washed hair.

Darcy. But without the Frank Bough-style diamond-patterned sweater.

"What I resent, though" – Natasha was looking all sort of twitchy and distorted as if she were in an Oxbridge debating society – "is this, this sort of, arrogant individualism which imagines each new generation can somehow create the world afresh."

"But that's exactly what they do do," said Mark Darcy gently.

"Oh well, I mean if you're going to look at it at that level ..." said Natasha defensively.

"What level?" said Mark Darcy. "It's not a level; it's a perfectly good point."

"No. No. I'm sorry, you're deliberately being obtuse," she said, going bright red. "I'm not talking about a ventilating deconstructionist freshness of vision. I'm talking about the ultimate vandalism of the cultural framework."

Mark Darcy looked as if he was going to burst out laughing.

"What I mean is, if you're taking that sort of cutesy, morally relativistic, 'Blind Date is brilliant' sort of line ..." she said with a resentful look in my direction.

"I wasn't. I just really like *Blind Date*," I said. "Though I do think it would be better if they made the pickers make up their own replies to the questions instead of reading out those stupid pal answers full of puns and sexual innuendoes."

10pm: Was just getting my coat to go home when heard Daniel's voice behind me.

"How come you know Mark Darcy?"

"They're friends of my parents. I used to play with him in the paddling pool."

"Yes, I bet you did, you dirty little bitch," he growled. "Do you want to come and have supper?"

Inner poise, I told myself, inner poise.

"Come on, Bridge," he said, leaning towards me seductively. "I need to have a serious discussion about your blouse. It's extremely thin. Almost, when you examine it, thin to the point of transparency. Has it ever occurred to you that your blouse might be suffering from ... bulimia?"

"I've got to meet someone," I whispered desperately.

"Come on, Bridge."

"No," I said with a firmness that rather surprised me.

"Shame," he said softly. "See you Monday," and gave me a look so dirty I felt like throwing myself after him shouting, "Shag me! Shag me!"

11pm: Just called Jude and told her about Daniel incident, also about Malcolm and Elaine Darcy's son, whom Mum and Una had tried to get me off with at the turkey curry buffet, turning up at the party looking rather attractive.

"Wait a minute," said Jude. "You don't mean Mark Darcy? The lawyer?"

"Yes. What – do you know him?"

"Well, yes, I mean, we've done some work with him. He's incredibly nice and attractive. I thought you said the chap at the turkey curry buffet was a real geek."

Humph. Bloody Jude.

## Saturday 3 June

8st 13; alcohol units 5; cigarettes 25; calories 600; minutes spent looking at brochures: long-haul 45, mini-break 87, 1471 calls 7 (g).

Finding it impossible to concentrate on almost anything in the heat except fantasies about going on mini-breaks with Daniel. Head is filled with visions of us lying in glades by rivers, me in long white floaty dress, Daniel and me sitting outside ancient Cornish waterside pub sipping pints in matching striped T-shirts and watching the sun set over the sea; Daniel and me eating candlelit dinners in historic country-house-botel courtyards then retiring to our room to shag all hot summer night.

Instead of being ushered into the office to meet the great Richard Finch, I was left pouring sweat in reception for 40 minutes thinking Oh my God who's the Health Secretary? before being picked up by the sing-song personal assistant – Patchouli – who sported Lycra cycle shorts and a nose stud and blushed at my Jigsaw suit, as if, in a hideously misjudged attempt to be formal, I had turned up in a floor-length shot-silk Laura Ashley ballgown.

"Richard says to come to the conference, know what I'm saying?" she muttered, powering off down a corridor while I scurried after her. She burst through a pink door into a vast open-plan office strewn with piles of scripts, TV screens suspended from the ceiling, charts all over the walls, and mountain bikes propped against the desks. At the far end was a large oblong table where the meeting was in progress. Everyone turned and stared as we approached.

A plump, middle-aged man with curly blond hair, a denim shirt and red Christopher Biggins spectacles was jiggling up and down at the end of the table.

"Come on! Come on!" he was saying, bolder up his fists like a boxer. "I'm thinking Hugh Grant. I'm thinking Elizabeth Hurley. I'm thinking how come two months on they're still together. I'm thinking how come he gets away with it. That's it! How does a man with a girlfriend who looks like Elizabeth Hurley have a blow-job from a prostitute on a public highway and get away with it? What happened to hell bath no fury?"

I could not believe this. What about the Shadow Cabinet? What about the Peace Process? He was obviously trying to work out how he could get

Anyway, Daniel and I are going to a party tonight at his friend Wicky's, then tomorrow I expect we will go to the park or out to a lovely pub in the country for lunch. It is marvellous having a boyfriend.

7pm: Humph. Daniel has just gone home. Bit fed-up, actually. Was really lovely hot Sunday but Daniel did not want to go out or discuss mini-breaks and insisted on spending all afternoon with the curtains drawn, watching the cricket. Also the party was quite nice last night, but at one point we went over to join Wicky's and a very pretty girl he was talking to, I did notice, as we approached, that she looked rather defensive.

"Daniel," said Wicky, "have you met Vanessa?"

"No," said Daniel, putting on his most flirtatious seductive grin and holding out his hand. "Nice to meet you."

"Daniel," said Vanessa, folding her arms and looking absolutely livid. "We've slept together."

"Well, maybe," I said, because it was the only thing I could think of. "It was because somebody swallowed the evidence." There was a deathly hush, then Richard Finch started to laugh. It was the most repulsive laugh I've ever heard in my life. Then all the grunge youths started to laugh as well.

"Bridget Jones," said Richard Finch eventually, wiping his eyes. "Welcome to *Good Afternoon*. Take a seat, my darling," and then he winked.

"Nine o'clock Service. I'm thinking dirty vicars. I'm thinking sexual acts in church. I'm thinking why do women fall for vicars? Come on, I'm not paying you for nothing. Have an idea."

"Why don't you interview Joanna Trollope?" I said.

"A trollup?" he said, staring at me blankly. "What trollup?" Joanna Trollope. The woman who wrote *The Rector's Wife* that was on the telly. *The Rector's Wife*. She should know.

A leery smile spread across his face. "Brilliant," he said to my hiccups. "Absolutely fucking brilliant. Anyone got a number for Joanna Trollope?"

There was a long pause. "Er, actually I have," I said eventually, feeling walls of hate vices coming from the grunge youths.

When the meeting was over I rushed to the loo to recover my composure and found Patchouli making herself up next to her friend, who was wearing a sprayed-on dress that showed her pants and midriff.

"This isn't too tarty, is it?" the girl was saying to Patchouli. "You should have seen those hitch-thirtysomethings' faces when I walked in ... Oh!"

Both girls looked at me, horrified, with their hands over their mouths.

"We didn't mean you," they said.

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away with sleeping with a prostitute himself. Suddenly, he was looking straight at me.

"Do you know?" The entire table of grunge youths stared. "You. You must be Bridget!" he shouted impatiently. "How does a man with a beautiful girlfriend manage to sleep with a prostitute, get found out and get away with it?" My mind went blank.

"Well?" he said. "Well? Come on, say something!"

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# ...watched video 17 times (bad); calories 2846

Humph. Incensed by patronising article in the paper by Smug Married journalist. It was headlined, with subtle-as-a-Frankie-Howard-sexual-innuendo-style irony: *The Joy of Single Life*. "They're young, ambitious and rich but their lives hide an aching loneliness... When they leave work a gaping emotional hole opens up before them... Lonely style-obsessed individuals seek consolation in packeted comfort food of the kind their mother might have made."

Huh. Bloody nerve. How does Mrs Smug Married-at-22 think she knows, thank you very much?

Mei Sharon, Jude and Tom after work. Tom, too, was working on a furious imaginary article about Smug Marrieds' gaping emotional holes. "Their influence affects everything from the kind of food that stocks the supermarket shelves," Tom's appalled article was going to rant. "Everywhere we see Anne Summers shops catering for housewives trying pathetically to simulate the thrilling sex enjoyed by Singletons and exotic foodstuffs in Marks & Spencer for exhausted couples trying to pretend they're in a lovely restaurant like the Singletons and don't have to do the washing-up."

"I'm bloody sick of this arrogant hand-wringing about single life!" roared Sharon.

"Yes, yes!" I said.

"You forgot the fuckwittage," burped Jude. "We always have fuckwittage."

"Anyway, we're not lonely. We have extended families in the form of networks of friends connected by telephone," said Tom.

"Yes! Hurrah! Singletons should not have to explain themselves all the time but should have an accepted status — like geisha girls do," I shouted, slurping on my tumbler of Chilean chardonnay.

"Geisha girls?" said Sharon, looking at me coldly.

"Shut up, Bridge," slurred Tom.

"You're drunk. You're just trying to escape from your yawning emotional hole into drunk."

"Well, so's bloody well Shazzer," I said sulkily.

"It's not," said Sharon.

"You're blurr are," I said.

"Look. Shuddup," said Jude, burping again. "Shagernothebol chardonnay?"

Friday 13 October  
9st 3 (but have temporarily turned into wine bag); alcohol units 0 (but feeding off wine bag); calories 0 (v.g.)  
\*Actually might as well be honest here. Not really v.g. as only 0 because puked up 5,876 calories immediately after eating. Oh God, I'm so lonely. An entire weekend stretching ahead with no one to love or have fun with. Anyway, I don't care. I've got a lovely steamed ginger pudding from M&S to put in the microwave.

Sunday 5 November  
Tom says he's too fat.  
"How many calories are you supposed to eat if you're on a diet?"  
"About 1,000. Well, I usually aim for 1,000 and come in at about 1,500," I said, realising as I said it that the last bit wasn't strictly true.  
"1,000?" said Tom incredulously.  
"But I thought you needed 2,000 just to survive."

I looked at him nonplussed. Have spent so many years being on a diet that the idea that you might actually need calories to survive has been completely wiped out of my consciousness. Have reached point where believe nutritional ideal is to eat nothing at all and that the only reason people eat is because they are so greedy they cannot stop themselves.

"How many calories in a boiled egg?" said Tom.

"75."

"Banana?"

"Large or small?"

"Small."

"80," I said, confidently.

"Olive?"

"Black or green?"

"Black."

"Nine."

"Hobnob?"

"81."

"Box of Milk Tray?"

"10,896."

"How do you know all this?"

I thought about it. "I just do, as one knows one's alphabet or times tables."

"OK. Nine eights," said Tom.

"64. No, 56, 72."

"What letter comes before J?"

"P. L, I mean."

Tom says I am sick but I happen to know for a fact that I am normal and no different from everyone else.

## Bridget's New Year's resolutions

### I will ...

- Stop smoking.
- Drink no more than 14 alcohol units a week.
- Reduce circumference of thighs by 3 inches (i.e. 1 1/2 inches each), using anti-cellulite diet.
- Purge flat of all extraneous matter.
- Give all clothes which have not worn for two years or more to homeless.
- Improve career and find new job with potential.
- Save up money in form of savings. Poss start pension also.
- Be more confident.
- Be more assertive.
- Make better use of time.
- Not go out every night but stay in and read books and listen to classical music.
- Give proportion of earnings to charity.
- Be kinder and help others more.
- Eat more pulses.
- Get up straight away when wake up in mornings.
- Go to gym three times a week not merely to buy sandwich.
- Put photographs in photograph albums.
- Make up compilation 'mood' tapes so can have tapes ready with all favourite romantic-dancing/rousing/feminist etc. tracks assembled instead of turning into drink-scidden DJ-style person with tapes scattered all over floor.
- Form functional relationship with responsible adult.
- Learn to programme video.

### I will not ...

- Drink more than 14 alcohol units a week.
- Smoke.
- Waste money on: pasta-makers, ice-cream machines or other culinary devices which will never use; books by unreadable literary authors to put impressively on shelves; exotic underwear, since pointless as have no boyfriend.
- Behave sluttishly around the house, but instead imagine others are watching.
- Spend more than earn.
- Allow in-tray to rage out of control.
- Fall for any of following: alcoholics, workaholics, commitment phobics, people with girlfriends or wives, misogynists, megalomaniacs, chauvinists, emotional fuckwits or freeloaders, perverts.
- Get annoyed with Mum, Una Alconbury or Perpetua.
- Get upset over men, but instead be poised and cool ice-queen.
- Have crushes on men, but instead form relationships based on mature assessment of character.
- Bitch about anyone behind their backs, but be positive about everyone.
- Obsess about Daniel Cleaver as pathetic to have a crush on boss in manner of Miss Moneypenny or similar.
- Sulk about having no boyfriend, but develop inner poise and authority and sense of self as woman of substance, complete without boyfriend, as best way to obtain boyfriend.

Bridget Jones's Diary is published by Picador on 25 October. To order a copy at the special price of £9.99 including P&P (RRP £12.99), please call our debit/credit card line on 0181 324-5700 or send a cheque/PO payable to 'BVCD', to 'Picador Bridget Jones Offer', 250 Western Avenue, London W3 6XZ.



# arts & books

Pinter: Memory into menace, page 8  
Big knobs and pills: Richard Mabey on plant life, page 9



## shelf life

Bill Drummond reviews his own back catalogue

**The Illuminatus**  
I designed the sets for this 24-hour play by Ken Campbell. It got a transfer in the Roundhouse but the night before its second run I got scared because my sets were falling apart. I was screwing this toilet bowl into the stage and it cracked, and that was it. I said, "I'm off to buy some glue," and never went back.

**Big in Japan**  
This group only lasted 12 months but that's about as long as any punk band should last. We never got anywhere, but all went on in success later on with bands like Siouxsie and the Banshees and The Teardrop Explodes. Once we managed to get on the promoters into putting us top of the bill. The next day we got a review that said, "sadly, they saved the worst 'til last".

**Echo and the Bunnymen**  
After the band fell apart I managed Echo and the Bunnymen. Looking back, I used their career as a canvas to express my own creativity, instead of making them rich. It was selfish but I was too innocent to be a swindler.

**The Manual: How to Have a Number 1 the Easy Way**  
As The Timelords, Jimmy Cauty and I set out to make a post-modern novelty hit. We

wanted to make a record that came from nowhere and annoyed the hell out of people. Afterwards I wrote this book. Basically it said you had to be on the dole, watch *Top of the Pops* every week and if you had any instruments you had to get rid of them. A band called Eidelweiss read it, sampled Swiss yodelling with Abba, and had number ones in Germany, Austria and Scandinavia.

**The KLF**  
The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu was our crowning moment, pure pop.

**The K Foundation**  
In 1994 we presented an award which mirrored the Turner Prize. People applauded us for attacking contemporary art, but we were saying contemporary art just wasn't contemporary enough. We also burnt a million quid. That was the most perfect thing I've done, it's an icon of the 20th century. Some people thought it was indulgence, others idealism but most were angry we hadn't given it to them.

**Bad Wisdom**  
I wrote this with Mark Manning. It's the story of our journey to plant an icon of Elvis at the North Pole. It wasn't fun. I'm driven by things I wish weren't driving me.

## Cliff: not the full Brontë

MUSICAL 'Heathcliff', The Academy, Birmingham

By Paul Taylor

Cliff Richard miscast as Heathcliff? Stuff and nonsense, say those of us who can remember thrilling to Perry Como's definitive *Antichrist*, Bonnie Langford's blood-freezing Medea and Max Bygraves's never-to-be-forgotten *Titus Andronicus*. No, this is a part that Cliff was destined to play. It's not just that *Wuthering Heights* is the one novel he admits to having read, you have to consider, too, the nature of Brontë's hero. With all that stuff about the "eternal rocks" and the descriptions of Heathcliff as arid whiteness, you feel that it would take a geologist rather than a psychiatrist to straighten the character out. Now cast your mind back to the days when the pop star was still young Harry Webb. Of all the Christian names available to him, what did he choose? Call me old-fashioned, but I say that's Freudian.

Cliff has been giving women hot flushes for almost four decades and you can't help thinking that for the bulk of his fan club nowadays, this is a case of taking coals to Newcastle. Sitting in an audience of close on 4,000 of them at the opening night, I felt outnumbered in a way that I haven't since I covered a lesbian version of *Peter Pan* at the Drill Hall. I'd certainly have felt more a part of the occasion if I'd been wearing a white pleated skirt and smart little navy jacket. On a television phone-in about the previous night's performance, devoted admirers said at length what you'd expect. The anchor person wondered whether there were any criticisms. One woman confessed that, in the climactic Heathcliff and Cathy scene, Cliff could perhaps "work on his passion". With respect to this lady, I think she's got it all wrong. The secret of Cliff's appeal is that his sexiness is utterly devoid of dangerous passion or threat. He's ageless, not in the sense that something perfect is flawless but in the sense that a vacuum is airless. His is a vacuum-packed innocence and I can understand the charm of it. Elvis he never was and, sure

enough, he gives you the kind of Heathcliff who, if he had a bit of a shave and trim, a girl could happily take home to meet her mum. Or a boy: in his book *Hockney On Hockney* the painter recalls how, back in the Sixties, he pinned to the wall a newspaper clipping with the headline "Two Boys Cling To Cliff All Night". David, mate, dream on.

Just how likeable and un-dangerous Cliff is was best epitomised for me by the final line-up. As women rushed to the stage, the beaming cast linked hands and swayed happily while singing over and over "the Devil Inca-a-estate". The phrase comes from one of Tim Rice's lyrics: is Heathcliff "the Devil Incarnate or / a misunderstood man"? But for all they were concentrating on the dark meaning of the line, the cast might just as well have been singing "a pina colada-a-da". Singalong-Satan. And as for the much-talked-about moment when Cliff has to hit a pregnant woman, there was an audible reaction, yes, but it struck me as registering surprise at the novelty of the thing (like first seeing members of the Royal Family on *It's a Knockout*) rather than the moral disorientation of, say, seeing Esther Rantzen child-beating.

I wouldn't want to run Cliff down, though - he has a very pleasant singing voice which is still in bloody good nick, given his age. Wooden he may be, and that transatlantic accent of his gets into a terrible state trying to do the Yorkshire accent ("I shall not stand to be laffed at"). But the bloke has what you can only describe as integrity. His utter palpable belief in this project may be misguided, but it's touching - particularly since most of the other elements in Frank Dunlop's awful production seem to be out to sabotage him.

High on this list comes John Farrar's music. When Buñuel filmed a version of *Wuthering Heights*, he used the chromatic excruciations and hot-house eroticism of *Tristan und Isolde*. You wouldn't expect such intensity from a



Devil incarnate or misunderstood man? Cliff Richard's integrity shines through

musical, but you might expect something better than the rapid pop pap Farrar dishes up. Nowhere is it deployed with dramatic intelligence. Take the use of reprise, where remembered emotion can be played off the emotion of the current scene. At Heathcliff's wedding to Isabella, there's a tripping, stiff-kneed number whose whole personality sounds quite ludicrous when it's reprised in, of all places, the graveyard scene.

Computer projections give you all kinds of sky: tealuna sunrise skies; revolving lashes of Tumeresque streaky bacon skies, etc. One-third of these projections had not been used at the preview because of a shortage of technical rehearsal time and other mishaps. Reviewing this preview, the arts editor of *The*

*Times* did not inform his readers (a) that it was a preview he was reviewing; (b) that the production was, at this stage, incomplete; or (c) that the people were none the less paying full price. But then, *The Times* is to journalism what *Heathcliff* is to art.

About to make his flower-laden final exit, Cliff came back, stooped to pick up a toy bear that someone had thrown and charmingly held it up for us to see. Presented with a fluffy toy, Brontë's Heathcliff (who hangs Isabella's dog, for God's sake) would drive a stake through its heart. Cliff, you felt, would give it a good home.

At The Academy, Birmingham, to 2 Nov (booking: 0121 200 2222), then Edinburgh, Manchester and London

## THE AUDIENCE RAVED

"ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC"

"CLIFF LOOKS GREAT AND THE SET IS AMAZING. JUST BRILLIANT"

"A FANTASTIC SPECTACLE"

"ABSOLUTELY MARVELLOUS"

HEATHCLIFF  
STARRING  
CLIFF RICHARD

WITH  
HELEN HOBSON  
AS CATHEY

"VERY DRAMATIC"

"SO MUCH GOING ON... SO ENJOYABLE"

"BRILLIANT... ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT"

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CLASSICAL MUSIC Hagai Shoham, Wigmore Hall, London

By Robert Cowan

The last time I heard Joseph Achron's *Hebrew Melody*, it was through a misty veil of shellac surface noise. But on Thursday evening at the Wigmore Hall, 30-year-old violinist Hagai Shoham drew aside the veil to reveal a soulful narrative and a tone that was as rich and vibrant as Jascha Heifetz's on my trusted old 78rpm record. Hagai gave us the *Melody* as one of two encores, having already treated us to three other works by Achron - the three-movement *Stempeny Sule*, a highly charged *Stimmung* and a rustic *Hebrew Dance*. Achron was born in Lithuania in 1886, emigrated to America and died there in 1943. His work recalls small Jewish communities in pre-Holocaust Eastern Europe, sacred in joy and supplication, passionate, excitable and without the least suggestion of pretension. It's the music

of heart and family, comfortable and intensely emotional and in marked contrast to the more cosmopolitan language of Ernest Bloch. Hagai's playing was both seamless and rhapsodic: he'd speed dangerously through the *Hebrew Dance* and yet his control of the bow allowed for an ethereal, long-breathed *diminuendo* at the end of the *Hebrew Melody*. Arnon Erez, Shoham's pianist, showed parallel insights into Achron's piano-writing (his handling of the *Melody*'s opening bars was remarkably free) and I was happy to learn that these talented young artists have recorded a whole CD's worth of Achron's music for Bidduph (it's a November release).

It was but a short hop from the *Hebrew Dance* of Achron to the *Hungarian Folk Dances* that Bartok arranged for piano and that

Joseph Szigeti transcribed for violin and piano. The same executive virtues warmed the melody line - curvaceous slides, a smoothly drawn tone, geocorous vibrato and judicious phrasing, with only the odd botched harmonic to mar the effect. Debussy's late Violin Sonata was suitably capricious, with some spectacular runs and fairly forthright support from Erez.

Prior to the interval, our fiery fiddler was a formal violinist and Arnon Erez more an accompanist than an equal partner. The opening Bach Sonata in E minor, BWV 1023, found Shoham rather rushing his fencings, sliding from the note's centre during the opening Allegro, though quickly regaining composure for the remaining three movements. This time, the tone was lean, bright and cool, whereas the *Kreutzer* Sonata had plenty of

"welly" and a good deal of theatrical inflection: Shoham is pretty adept at soaring high on a *forte* then diving to a sudden *pianissimo*. The second movement went very well (Shoham's trills are immaculate), though I would have welcomed less of a gap between individual variations. The finale was a genuine *Presto*, played with its repeat intact (the first movement's repeat was omitted) and maintaining considerable momentum for the duration. It was a good performance, more respectful than perceptive, whereas Hagai Achron, Bartok and Debussy were confided "from the inside". If he plays for us again - and I sincerely hope that he does - perhaps he will forgo the formality of a "classical first half" and treat us to more rarities by Achron and, perhaps, Hubay or Ysaie.



### overview

### critical view

### on view

### our view



THE FILM		THE PLAY	THE OPERA
Breaking the Waves		Art	The Ring
Emily Watson stars as a saint-like Scots girl whose marriage brings a kind of martyrdom in Lars von Trier's emotional tale of doubt, faith, love and redemption. The Cannes Grand Jury prizewinner.		Matthew Warchus directs Tom Courtenay, Albert Finney and Ken Stott in Christopher Hampton's translation of Yasmina Reza's smash hit comedy about friendship, betrayal and modern art.	Richard Jones's revised Royal Opera production of Wagner's complete <i>Ring</i> cycle, designed by Nigel Lowery, conducted by Bernard Haitink with casts including Siegfried Jerusalem and John Tomlinson.
Adam Mars-Jones hailed "an astonishing film, so well thought-out and passionately executed". "A melodrama of astonishing power... holds you, sometimes painfully, in its grip for every one of 158 minutes," cried the <i>Times</i> . "A fearless performance and a devastating film," trumpeted <i>Premiere</i> . "A test for the stomach as well as the eyes," sniffed the <i>Standard</i> . "Overwhelming... a remarkable achievement," applauded <i>Time Out</i> .		Impressed but wary, Paul Taylor enjoyed "meringue masquerading as piquantly sauced meat". "A remarkably wise, witty and elegant comedy," cooed the <i>Times</i> . "An endless stream of enjoyably phillistine jokes... Cracking entertainment," grinned the <i>Telegraph</i> . "Invigorating, disturbing and finally touching," praised the <i>FT</i> . "Superbly acted and directed... for all its manifest cleverness, panders to popular prejudice," sniffed the <i>Guardian</i> .	Disagreeing with the <i>Independent's</i> earlier assessment, Robin Holloway couldn't reconcile the "incongruities between the seen and the heard". "Much, much better," approved the <i>FT</i> . "Seeks to express the human significance of the <i>Ring</i> ... compelling," judged the <i>Guardian</i> . "Haitink is one of the great Wagnerians... a <i>Ring</i> for and of today, thoughtful, comfortless, 'critical' in the very best sense," cheered the <i>Times</i> .
Lumiere, London WC2 (0171-370 3014) and at selected screens across London.		Booking fast at Wyndham's Theatre, London WC2 (0171-369 1736)	Tonight: <i>Götterdämmerung</i> , final cycle 24, 25, 28 Oct & 2 Nov at Covent Garden (0171-304 4000) and on Radio 3.
Intensely naturalistic performances, stylised camera work, a flood of emotion.		An elegant, intelligent comedy allowing audiences to indulge their phillistinism.	Traditionalists should stay home. Everyone else should consider the pilgrimage.



# Tenor counter-tenor

Meet Robson & Robson, the family firm that's cornered the market in close-harmony vocals. By David Benedict

You're an opera director and you're recasting your latest hit. There are two key roles for tenor and counter-tenor, brothers in arms, whose friendship has been forged in battle and who have saved one another's lives. Your singers have to convince an audience of the passionate struggle between religion, free will and political duty. Whom do you cast? Peter Sellars's inspired answer is the brothers Robson.

The case of singing siblings Nigel and Christopher isn't unique, but it's damned rare. The soprano Kristine Ciesinski has a mezzo sister, Katherine; Terry and Neil Jenkins have been known to play Happy Families, but discounting the Everly Brothers and the Nolan Sisters, that's about it.

What is unique about the pair of them, aside from the unusual pairing of tenor and counter-tenor, is their acting talent. These two aren't just international soloists who sing on stage, they are genuine operatic animals. Cast either of them and you can wave good-bye to the old-fashioned "stand and deliver" performance style. Both are more than capable of producing honeyed tones, but these two give you something bolder, richer and altogether more theatrical. Some directors (and particularly record producers) favour evenness of sound above all else. It's a little reminiscent of the Tebaldi and Callas debate: purity versus passion. Luckily for anyone going to Glyndebourne's inspirational staging of Handel's oratorio *Theodora*, Peter Sellars has opted for the dramatic approach.

What he cannot have known is just how ideally suited these two are to playing the roles of the Roman commanding officer Septimius and his friend Didymus, a convert to the forbidden faith of Christianity. The Robsons' parents were officers in the Salvation Army, but they are both keen to dispel any notions of bible-bashing and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*-style repression. Not only was theirs an enlightened evangelical environment, music was central to their lives. They sang constantly and played brass instruments in the Salvation

Army band. "We even sang grace around the table in slightly improvised four-part harmony," says Nigel, the elder of the two, and the second of four sons. Their father was constantly writing music for the church but, again, not the imagined four-square English hymnal stuff. Nigel remembers that, as early as 1948, within three years of its premiere, his father had the sheet music for two arias from Britten's *Peter Grimes* that he wanted to sing.

"It was all part and parcel really. We were encouraged in music," observes Chris, the counter-tenor, "but there was never any pressure, just as there was no pressure to join the Salvation Army. There was no pressure on us to do anything other than what we chose to do."

Neither of them is a practising Christian any longer, but their father's influence is there for all to see. Both have reputations as 20th-century music specialists, traceable back to their monthly record allowance and their father's encouraging them to listen to Messiaen and Stockhausen. He was also responsible for their interest in performing. "Dad used to do these evangelical musicals," says Nigel, "cobbling together bits of operetta and so on. It feels a bit embarrassing looking back." ("Awful," laughs Chris.) "Things like *Salvation Ship Ahoi*, a sort of *Billy Budd* for the Lord." ("Jesus saves" in the waves," giggles Chris.) "He also did this strange thing, *Three Faces of Eve*, which was bits of a play plus Vaughan Williams's music for *Job*, over which he narrated the story of creation: while people would mind it in some way, like dance."

Yet, for all their mixed feelings about the "church operas", both brothers recognise the experience as having ignited very strong feelings in them about theatre. Professional singing, however, was not immediately on the agenda. Nigel went to York University as an organist and composer, while Chris went to Trinity Music College as a trumpet player.

"My voice came down very slowly over a year," he recalls. "When I went to Cam-

bridge Tech, aged nearly 17, it had settled into a light tenor / baritone, but I didn't sing. Then, at the beginning of my second year, someone heard me mucking about in the practice room and said I should have lessons, so I started singing tenor. One day I went straight from a trumpet lesson to a singing lesson, which was unusual. When I read the music, having been hearing the higher pitch on the trumpet, I read it wrong and sang an octave too high. Impressed, his teacher told him that, to allow the counter-tenor voice to settle, he shouldn't sing for a while. "Of course, I just went away and practised."

Music college was a disaster. "I was slung out in the middle of my second term. Some say my musical education began then," he says. He started lessons with Helga Mott - he stayed with her for 10 years - and within 12 months was earning a living, doing everything from deputising in church choirs, to pop sessions at Wembley Studios and radio jingles.

"The goals were to make a living and to make the sound as pure and straight as possible, because the majority of the work was ensemble singing. Now you can sing with a bigger, fuller voice, with vibrato, with much more vocal freedom."

As last year's jockey *The Three Counters* disc shows, there is no longer one counter-tenor sound. Each of those three soloists has a distinctive timbre. While Chris was developing his sound in the wake of the 1970s counter-tenor boom heralded by the ascendancy of James Bowman - "a voice like a trombone," says Chris - his brother was studying singing at the Royal Northern College in Manchester and was having a struggle of his own. "I had a rather unfortunate obsession with Peter Pears," he grins. "I wanted to be able to communicate directly with people in the way he did. It wasn't so much that I wanted to make his sound, although I inevitably tried to, it was more to do with his understanding of humanity, a quality of compassion."

It was the Australian director David Freeman who brought them together and



Brothers in arms: Nigel cradles brother Christopher in a work-in-progress production of *The Maids*. Keith Saunders

changed their lives. He had already cast Chris in his celebrated Opera Factory staging of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, when the scheduled tenor, unable to cope with Freeman's dramatic demands, pulled out a week into rehearsals. Chris suggested Nigel, who had just left Manchester, and, after auditioning for Freeman and conductor John Eliot Gardiner, he too joined the company.

Chris credits Freeman with opening up his latent desire to improvise and perform, and the pair of them thrived. Nigel describes it as a shared, daring, idealistic desire to see how far Freeman's discipline of improvisation and characterisation could go in finding ways of speaking to an audience. "He created parameters for a performer, making us create a character who then played the role," says Chris. "That made it easier than just going in and playing Orfeo." They relished the shared responsibility for a piece, working with a director who liberated the performer, allowing them to discover things for them-

selves, something far more akin to theatre than the intensely formal, hierarchical world of traditional opera rehearsals.

The release of their dramatic powers ensured their distinctive operatic careers. They have both excelled in mad scenes. Nigel playing a powerful Madwoman in Opera Factory's production of Britten's *Curlew River*, while Chris's intense portrayal of Edgar and Mad Tom formed a still, emotional centre to Reimann's *Lear* at ENO. They played *La Calisto* together and, in a semi-staged concert version of the Britten *Canticles*, they put a fraternal spin on Abraham and Isaac. "Brother killing brother," muses Nigel mischievously. "Interesting."

Their religious upbringing has resurfaced, unbidden, in *Theodora*. For Chris, "one of the reasons I have been so forceful about Didymus the convert being so completely enraptured by his conversion is possibly a subconscious reaction to believing that this is a very real possibility." Nigel sees the religious parallel in wider terms.

"One of the greatest gifts a parent can give to a child is a feeling of responsibility about making their own mind up. Not everyone has that. That feeling of freedom about religion lies at the heart of *Theodora*."

Whatever their thought-processes, the intensity of their scenes together in rehearsals has moved at least one observer to tears. Their next joint project may move audiences in yet another direction. Producer Jean Nicholson is hoping to present them in the title roles of an opera based on Genet's *The Maids*, specially commissioned from composer John Lunn. They are still negotiating the rights, but a 25-minute workshop of a couple of scenes has already yielded exciting results. As in *Theodora*, the intimacy between the characters is lent an extra charge by their own relationship: the epitome of sibling rivalry. How much more typecast can you get?

*Theodora*: tonight, Tues, Fri, Glyndebourne Opera House, E Sussex (booking: 01273 813813), then touring



Jasper Rees on Television

Do you remember what you were doing when you heard that Mary Millington was dead? Thought not. But do you remember who she was when she was alive? She was the muse of David Sullivan, the country's photographer-in-chief, who somehow achieved a newsworthiness out of all proportion to anything she had on offer. She was "ideal for glamour", as one photographer told her, innuendo dangling somewhere in front of the solar plexus. In the diplomatic argot of the sex industry, that meant she was a midwife with a near the size of a Space Hopper; built not for clothes-horse work but for other branches of equestrianism. Millington stood 4' 11" in her birthday suit, the garment in which she mostly did business - although, according to context, she might be seen modelling shreds of bikini, or the latest gizmo from the flourishing sex-aid market. When Sullivan launched *Whitehouse*, a pink mag that charmingly borrowed the surname of his most public enemy, he slapped his slapper on the cover. He even made her editor, though in a purely figleaf capacity: she was appointed to prove that a woman's role in pornography was not solely

to give guided tours of her fallopian tubes. She was "our little bit of Hollywood", mused someone from the *Sunday Mirror*. The 1970s must have been even worse than we thought they were.

A childlike, bottle-blond, blow-waved attention-seeker, Millington promoted the idea of a spiritual sorority with Marilyn Monroe. But if she was anyone's little sister, it was Diana Dors's (with whom she slept on the quiet, and whose, busband she, bedded, less furtively, on screen). The *Mary Millington Story* (C4, Sat) made as much of it could of the Norma Jean fixation, conscious that it purchased for her tawdry suicide a depth it could not supply on its own. It was suggested that, like Marilyn, Mary Millington bed-hopped along the corridors of power. She was once summoned by the Shah of Persia (the little known sale of bums-to-Iran), but the programme could supply no photographic evidence that she pleased the powerful, unless you count the snap of her sitting fully clothed on Jimmy Hill's knee (yes, knee).

The sugar daddies and dirty undies who cherish her memory insist that she fought a useful fight against censorship. Among the freedoms she therefore helped bring about was the right to ogle at *Eurotrash* (C4, Fri), which seems to get frakier with every passing frame, and Channel 5's "adult" programming. Announced last week, this will apparently stay onside taste-wise, but the boundary is growing ever hazier. The answer, surely, is to adopt the grading system used by soap

powders: biological or non-biological.

From Mammon to God, midnight to mid-morning. In *The Big Question* (BBC1, Sun) Mark Lawson asks celebrities where they stand on His existence. Scheduled after matins with the Very Reverend David Frost, it's a wafer-thin quarter of an hour - 15 minutes of faith. Big questions run the risk of provoking small answers, and Sir Anthony Hopkins is no less qualified to supply these than the rest of us. Sir Anthony doesn't seem to believe in heaven, but may well recognise a hell in which he is condemned to a perpetuity of interviews about his recovery from alcoholism. Now and then, a grainy eye-view cut in from overhead, teasing you with the idea that somebody up there might be watching. If any vicars are reading, there's a trendy metaphor for tomorrow's sermon: God as security camera. Which begs another Big Question: does He still watch in black and white?

This is basically a chat show that happens not to be eponymously titled, because there's no more evidence that Lawson is curious about God's existence than there is of God's existence itself. *Smilie's People* (BBC1, every weekday), the first known instance of a chat show taking its name from a Cold War thriller, runs to the same length as Lawson's inquisition. It could almost be his little sister: *The Small Question*. "What about live concerts?" the grim interrogator grilled Lesley Garrett on Monday. "What have you got coming up?" Ve haf ways of making you plug...



Robert Hanks on Radio

A typical letter was the one from a woman who wrote that at this time of day her two-year-old was likely to be listening and picking up words like "dildo". Jonathan-James Moore, head of light entertainment at BBC Radio, defended entertainment at BBC Radio, defended the programme on the grounds that his department had been putting out slightly risqué comedy at 6.30pm on a Thursday for the past four years, and had thereby established a context.

Personally, I'm agnostic on *Doon Your Way* and not particularly bothered by its obscenity, even in the mouths of two-year-olds - to be frank, I'm always amused when people use rude words without knowing what they mean. In any case, why

all this fuss about a dildo: is there really anything so distasteful about an extinct flightless bird from Mauritius?

What does disturb me is Mr Moore's idea that he can establish a discrete context within Radio 4 for 30 minutes one evening a week, sandwiched in between the *Six O'Clock News* and *The Archers*. As it happens, this sort of thing goes on quite a lot - I think I'm right in saying that, for instance, Radio 4 is more likely to transmit gritty contemporary dramas on a Wednesday afternoon than on a Thursday, something to bear in mind if you want to save your children from the creeping vices of swearing and socialism. But it ignores the way that most people listen to the radio most of the time - that is, continuously, not switching on and off for individual programmes. It's hard to think that Mr Moore really believes listeners are alert to such subtleties in scheduling ("I keep forgetting what day of the week it is, darling"). I just heard somebody say "twat" on Radio 4, dear, so it must be Thursday.

Even if listeners do spot what's going on, how does it justify anything? If we were to carp at the mediocrity and silliness of the new *Whitehall* spy series *Colvi* and *Soames*, which goes out on a Wednesday lunchtime, would Radio 4

answer by saying that they've been putting out mediocre and silly drama series in this slot for years, and felt listeners knew what to expect?

Of course, the real context that justifies *Doon Your Way* isn't its time slot, but the strong British tradition of clever comedy which combines mild surrealism with an urge to *épater les bourgeois*. McKichan's Brownie trying for her porn badge can trace her ancestry back through *The Young Ones*, *Monty Python*, *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*, Mary Feldman and Barry Took's scripts for *Round the Horne* and *Beyond the Fringe* all the way back to *The Goon Show*.

The tradition was neatly summed up in David Renwick's play *Angry Old Men* (Radio 4, Monday), which revolved around four comedians - and their attractive female sidekick - who in the Fifties and Sixties broke new ground with their madcap antics and use of words like "clitoris"; now they are old and screwed up, and one of them has been murdered. What was most impressive here was the way Renwick managed to duplicate the sort of humour he was referring to - showing you in the process how formulaic anachronistic comedy can be. It was a clever play, but I'm not sure that makes up for it being a bit of a killjoy.

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# Turning memory into menace

John Campbell, reading the biography he was once slated to write, finds unexpected personal echoes in the work of "an all-round man of the theatre"

The Life and Work of Harold Pinter by Michael Billington, Faber £20

Four years ago I wanted to write a biography of Harold Pinter. Just for a moment he nibbled at the idea, then declined to help. I got as far as approaching some of his friends, but he warned them off. To discourage me from persisting he suggested to his publishers that they ask the *Guardian* theatre critic Michael Billington to write a book – not a biography, it was firmly stated, but a critical study, with some biographical assistance.

Pinter chose well. It is an outstandingly good hook. More nearly a full-blown biography, I suspect, than he initially agreed to, but Billington evidently gained his confidence and persuaded him to talk – not so unguardedly as Robert Runcie, but certainly more freely than he has ever done before – and to let others talk. By modern standards it is an unusually tactful biography. The title precisely describes the balance between life and criticism: Billington probes the life only so far as it illuminates the work, not for its own sake. Thus we learn remarkably little about Pinter's parents, and not much about the long painful deterioration of his marriage to Vivien Merchant or his alienation from their son. But we do learn a lot that throws new light on the plays: Billington is the first critic to make use of Pinter's archive which he recently gave to the British Library. Pinter should be very happy with his pre-emptive strike.

Memory has become an increasingly explicit theme in Pinter's work since the mid-Sixties. But it was always clear that even the early plays were rooted in the soil of his own life. He was an only child, but raised in a large and extrovert extended family. His childhood idyll was shattered by evacuation. But his really formative years were his teens, just after the war, when he fell in with a precociously intellectual gang of mainly Jewish friends at Hackney Downs School: together they explored Lawrence, Kafka and Dostoevsky. Pound, Bunuel and all the daring paths of modernism in literature, music and film, encouraged by an inspiring teacher called Joe Brearley. This world of intense male comradeship disturbed by sexual rivalry was the subject of Pinter's only novel, *The Dwarfs*, written in the early Fifties. Even before this, in 1949, he had written an unpublished prose poem, "Kullus", which astonishingly anticipates the themes of his mature work.

More specifically, most of his later plays turn out to have their origin in real life: sometimes it is just an unexplained image which triggered his imagination, sometimes a more conscious process of transmutation. His very first play, *The Room*, sprang from a glimpse of two strange people in a room (one of whom was Quentin Crisp); *The Homecoming* (written in 1958, though not staged till 1980) stemmed from his experience as a guinea-pig (for ten bob a time) at the Maudsley Hospital; *Old Times*, written in 1970, recalls Bohemian days sharing flats in Chelsea and Fulham 20 years before. The characters of Aston and Davies in *The Caretaker* were based on real individuals who lived in the same house as Pinter and Vivien on Chiswick High Road; the starting-point of *The Homecoming* was one of Pinter's Hackney gang who married a Gentile girl, emigrated to Canada and kept his marriage secret from his Jewish family; while Billington's well-trailed "scoop" is the revelation that *Betrayal* has nothing to do with Antonia Fraser, but is based on Pinter's much earlier affair with Joan Bakewell.

The knowledge of their origins does not demystify the plays; it only increases one's admiration for the way Pinter transmutes

memory into art. The power of his writing always stemmed from its specificity: the nature of the famous menace might be unexplained, but the setting (particularly of the early plays) was always chillingly realistic, the characters precisely placed in terms of class and speech. It is this social precision which makes Pinter, to my mind, so much more disturbing than the depersonalised abstraction of Beckett or the absurdity of Ionesco. It is typical that Pinter's screenplay of Kafka's *The Trial* sets the book meticulously in its period, eschewing the windy expressionism of earlier film treatments.

The plays' power derives, secondarily, from Pinter's old-fashioned craftsmanship. Billington is not the first to show how Pinter's mastery of suspense, interrogation scenes and comic cross-talk draws on his years of acting in third-rate whodunits in weekly rep up and down the country in the Fifties. But much of Pinter's strength lies in his admiration for the work of superficially very different writers like Coward and Rattigan, who in turn admired him. In recent years he has tended to act only in his own plays; but he is a scrupulous director of other people's plays. He has also written 22 screenplays, the best of which rank with his original stage work. He has an uncanny capacity to make other writer's books – *The Servant*, *Accident*, *The Go-Between* to name just three – unmistakably his own, without distorting them. The point is that he has become and remained an all-round man of the theatre, with several strings to his bow and always busy. Again the comparison is with Coward or Ayckbourn, professionals and survivors, by contrast with contemporaries like Osborne, Wesker and Nichols – pure writers whose careers dried up when inspiration flagged. Billington suggests that Hirst in *No Man's Land* – the character Pinter himself played at the Almeida in 1994 – is a nightmare vision of what he might become if he stopped working.

He has found writing increasingly hard since at least 1967; his subconscious does not produce to order. When an image suddenly crystallizes he writes very fast. But his stage works in recent years have been both shorter and slither. The explicitly political *One for the Road*, *Mountain Language* and *Pony Time* were scarcely more than brutal sketches; *Moonlight* and *Ashes to Ashes* return to the theme of memory, but with some loss of dramatic tension and an element of self-plagiarism (even self-parody). Billington makes a strong case for these later pieces – relating *Moonlight* to Pinter's estrangement from his son – but he does not fully explore the impact of his second marriage. It seems unquestionable that Vivien was in some senses his muse; though he denies consciously writing parts for her, she remains the essential Pinter woman. The tensions of that marriage – which lasted 20 years – produced all his great plays; Antonia Fraser has given him a new happiness and security, but something has gone out of his work.

Meanwhile Billington has written far and away the most authoritative critique of Pinter's work so far. Though occasionally repetitive, it is beautifully written; time and again his insight, sensitivity and wide frame of theatrical reference sheds new understanding on the most difficult plays. The pity is that it will be read largely by those who already admire Pinter, rather than those who still find him pretentious or obscure. But the recent spate of revivals suggests that the doubters are in retreat – for my money he already ranks with Ibsen and Chekhov.



Pinter: intense male comradeship disturbed by sexual rivalry

PHOTOGRAPH: NIGEL PARRY/KATZ

## Falling off the bottom line

E. Jane Dickson enjoys an embroidered tale of fashion and fortune

Fighting Fashion by Helen Storey, Faber, £12.99

In 1995, when the designer Helen Storey sent her models down the catwalk with bare bums, it was the most talked about collection since the legendary Emperor's new look. The international fashion establishment sprayed superlatives. The tabloids couldn't believe their luck. Desmond Morris was wheeled out to explain the cultural relevance of the buttock and John Major made an uncharacteristically cheeky showing in cartoons. Three weeks after her *succès de scandale*, Storey, hailed on all sides as the decade's most original fashion talent, was on the dole. *Fighting Fashion*, the designer's autobiographical account of her career, is a commendably

dry-eyed analysis of the complicated relationship of rags and riches.

There is a strong sense of release in *Fighting Fashion*, as if Storey sat down to write one day, just to sort things out in her head, and found herself unable to stop.

Autobiography as therapy is a doleful prospect for the reader, and Storey's reflections on her early life, complete with diligent acknowledgement of best friends from the age of five, are sometimes surplus to requirements. The daughter of the playwright and novelist, David Storey, she conjures up the liberal Bohemia of the 1960s and 70s with the deadpan cool of an unimpressed teenager but the

occasional, irresistible flash of remembered excitement, like the day Elizabeth Taylor appeared in the passenger seat of her dad's Mini, breaks through. Hampstead Comprehensive was a daily gauntlet to be run, a place which "smelt of pencil sharpenings and feet", where boys lay in wait to flick at girls' breasts with their rulers, but the nights were for clubbing and roller-skating home from Shagaramas with six hours' worth of make up running down her face and the wind in her day-glo hair was Storey's first intimation of glamour.

Later, as a fashion graduate on work experience with Valentino in Rome, Storey was properly inducted into the mysteries of *haute couture* and she describes the quasi-mystic processes of the fashion industry with a kind of appalled reverence: "There is a force in fashion, at the very top level, that invents its own manners, sensitivity, standards and rules. They bear no relation to the real world. Untouched by recession, they went unchallenged."

For Storey, however, the real world would constantly disrupt and indeed define her creativity, and as she acknowledges, "to express an instinct outside the arena of clothes on a catwalk is a dangerous thing, or if not dangerous, then pointless." In the final *annus horribilis* leading up to insolvency she nursed her husband, the architect Ron Brinkers through a brain tumour; designs for the spring/summer collection were sketched at his bedside: "Having a pen in my hand made me feel normal, but I couldn't relate to the fabrics, I couldn't feel them, and in

feeling nothing for them I was aware how numb I was. The barometer of my feelings was registered through a lack of spontaneity to cloth."

It is doubtless the hellishness of the cancer ward, evoked in a chapter that is properly painful to read, that allows Storey to maintain her apparently dispassionate view of her professional nemesis. This is not a woman injured to fashion fever – she can write with absolute self-consciousness about her "Journey of challenging the expected use of trims", but she has ultimately succeeded in channelling creative energy into an ably concerted campaign for better "fashion management." In an industry fuelled by outsized egos, she is generously concerned that others should profit from her unfortunate experience. "It should be accepted that designers should not be running the day to day, or for that matter any other area of the business other than design."

*Fighting Fashion* is required reading for anyone in, or hoping to enter the fashion industry. As a general interest autobiography it is less appealing. Storey's idiosyncratic style can at times verge on the incomprehensible. The assertion that "The word 'remission' does not allow a bare arse to its brickwork" is rather more arresting than enlightening, and there are plenty of these teasers sprinkled through the narrative. Storey's extraordinary artistry is there to see in the beautifully produced photos of the collections, but she is not a writer, and this is not a writer's book. And why should it be? No one ever expected Flaubert to challenge the use of trims.

## Notes on a smallish peninsula

Jan Morris is full of admiration for a bold new history of Europe

A History of Europe by Norman Davies, Oxford University Press, £25

This is a modern history with a vengeance. In the sense that it employs devices of historiography unthinkable to traditional academe. Norman Davies describes it as "a total history of all Europe in every period", and he talks of it in photographic terms – zooms, telephotos, wide-angle snapshots. Its narrative of 1,300 pages is interrupted by 300 asides which he calls capsules, and supplemented by appendices covering matters as general as European Cultural Circles, as exact as The Jagiellonian Realm up to 1572. I enormously enjoyed the whole display, learnt a vast amount from it (I had never heard of the Jagiellonian Realm), and were it not for its bulk would have read the whole of it happily in my bath.

The book is recognizably akin to Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's dazzling *Millennium*, which is similarly cybernetic and disarmingly self-satisfied. It reminded me too of Braudel's Mediterranean histories, of Claudio Magris' *Danube* and of Neal Ascherson's *Black Sea*. But it is distantly related to OUP's last single-volume history of Europe, written by T.L. Plunkett and R.B. Mowat in 1927: it is an odd feeling in fact to peel off this volume's shiny jacket and discover the Oxford binding of simple blue and gold, unchanged since the days when Europe was the heart of the world.

Actually I still think it is, but one of the great changes between the old-type histories and the new is the abandonment of Eurocentricism. As even I recognize, Europe is no more than a smallish peninsula on the flank of Asia, and the globe does not after all

revolve around it. Few of us now get a classical education. Relatively few of us are Christian. We look at Europe through different eyes from those of our grandparents, and it has fallen to Davies to re-define for our generation what Europe really is at the end of the 20th century.

He also corrects some more specific biases. Because he is an authority on Polish history, he has easily done away with the old view of Europe as being generically divided between east and west, and in fact allows its borders to spill over into Russia. He resolutely sets his face against over-specialisation, pernicious political correctness, and the petty rivalries which so often divide the energies of academic historians. Sentiments as well as realities enrich his view of Europe, he is as concerned with the actions of famous men as he is with the progress of humble families. His kind of history is, as he says himself, rather like that theoretical polygon by which Archimedes calculated the ratio between the diameter and the circumference of a circle: the more sides he gave the polygon, the nearer a circle it would be, and similarly the more facets a historical narrative possesses, the more likely it is to approach the truth.

There are snags to this prismatic approach, but they are more literary than historiographical. It is hard to keep up the grand flow of a narrative when it is, so to speak, polygonal. Those capsules keep getting in the way – physically, because they sometimes block an entire page, intellectually because they are often irrelevant to the immediate argument. It is ironic, too, that so

intelligent a book should be hampered by one of the most unhelpful systems of footnotes imaginable: the chapter notes are listed only by chapter number, making them maddeningly difficult to find, and there are separately listed notes to those 300 capsules – enough to make the most appreciative reader drop the thing with a curse into the bath water. The maps are irritating too, often printed with west at the top, and just occasionally I was jarred by Davies' lapses into exhibitionism, rather in the A.J.P. Taylor style.

That said, Davies' *History of Europe*, is a noble monument of scholarship, and all the more noble because it is so full of surprise and feeling: the publishers are surely justified in claiming it to be "one of the most important and illuminating history books ever to be published by Oxford." The tremendous range of its story is matched by its liberal attention to details tragic and comic, mundane and sublime. There are superb assessments of vastly daunting subjects, like the Thirty Years War or the Renaissance. There are steady assessments of the state of contemporary Europe. For one of my views Davies is perhaps a little too intolerant of anything approaching the Communist: but that is partly because he is anxious to correct what he calls the Allied Version of post-war European history.

Who can complain about a book which not only gives a thorough, more or less conventional account of the continent's story, Black Death, Holy Roman Empire, Hundred Years' War, Napoleon, Industrial Revolution and all, but illuminates it with such eclectic exuberance? The ori-

gin of the necktie, biblical allusions of Chernobyl, cocking a snook as a pan-European gesture, prehistoric foods, condoms, famous European last words – such are a handful of the topics with which he illustrates the history of Europe.

His choice of illustrations, or at least their captioning, seems to me too whimsical to be satisfying, but his repeated use of music is masterly. Sometimes with printed extracts from scores, he uses music as a catalyst, distilling the moods and aspirations of the Europe of its time, and bringing to the page some of the emotions of its geniuses, and I suspect of his own. For it is an emotional book in many ways, and there is nothing clinical or lofty about its attitudes. Davies even tells us what kind of car Archduke Franz Ferdinand was driving in, when they shot him at Sarajevo in 1914 (a 28 horsepower Graf and Stift, four years old).

And for some readers in 1996 it will be a liberating work. It is hardly revisionist history, but it is not just a history of the States and Powers, nor simply of the policy-makers or the common man. It takes into account all the in-betweens, the minority peoples, the nations without statehood whose existence has been overshadowed by the terrible comings and goings of history, and who see glimmers of hope in the prospect of a united Europe. Professor Davies is not a Davies for nothing. He (or his publishers) may not be able to spell *Awyl*, but who would expect to find, in a total history of all Europe, a reference to the native parliament held at Machynlleth, Wales, in 1401?

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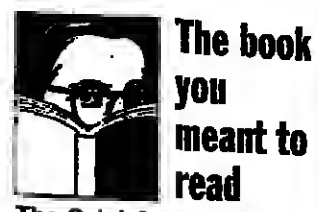
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**The book you meant to read**  
*The Quiet American* (1955)  
by Graham Greene

**Plot:** Set in Vietnam during the French occupation, the novel is narrated by Thomas Fowler, a middle-aged English journalist. The action circles around the murder of Alden Pyle "the Quiet American". He works for the Economic Aid Mission. At once innocent, naive and ignorant he believes religiously in the American way of democracy: as a result he is entangled in guerilla politics, backing the terrorist General Thé against the French. Pyle also falls for Fowler's girlfriend Phuong (Phoenix). He offers her the chance of marriage. Even though Fowler's distaste for Pyle intensifies, he finds himself dragged into the American's political conspiracies. A bomb explodes in a café causing injury and death. Fowler knows that Pyle was involved and, concluding that he must be stopped, betrays him. Pyle is killed with a rusty bayonet. The crime is investigated by Vigot, a vigilant detective familiar with Pyle. Phuong returns to Fowler. He cannot decide whether his act of betrayal was motivated by political necessity or personal malice.

**Theme:** "This is the patent age of new inventions for killing bodies for saving souls, all propagated with the best intentions." The epigraph is taken from Byron. In a fallen world, Pyle's heartless idealism is as evil as Fowler's narcissistic detachment. Only Vigot, whose work is a "calling", can have any chance of salvation.

**Style:** Despite the exotic location, the writing is grainy and monochrome, like old film. Here is a world where nobody belongs and "nothing is fabulously and nothing rises from the ashes." The prose can match the pace of a popular thriller.

**Chief strengths:** The clearest and most convincing analysis of the American involvement in Vietnam. No other writer conveys the shifting effects of bad conscience with such precision and enthusiasm.

**Chief weaknesses:** The misanthropy and disillusionment sometimes crumbles into caricature: the gloomy phases are so pat they turn mechanical. Even Morse doesn't read Pascal.

**What they thought of it then:** In England it was deemed a success. Evelyn Waugh thought the book "vigorous" and the *Tablet* gave its blessing. The Americans were marked. *Newsweek* thought the whole enterprise an act of spite, perpetrated because Greene had suffered from visa trouble.

**What we think of it now:** Greene's reputation lurched badly after his death. He was dismissed as a 'Thirties' dinosaur who had never recovered from the obsessions of his school days. Nevertheless, all his novels remain in print and they continue to sell.

**Responsible for:** The fascination with betrayal which haunts the works of Le Carré and Deighton. Conversely Greene's pre-occupation with the intricacies of Catholic theology has not proven fertile ground for the contemporary thriller.



**The books you listen to**  
Yesterday the Audiobook Oscars were awarded at the annual Talkies award. Amongst the winners the following were to be found: Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, read by Prunella Scales; Doyle's *The Woman Who Walked into Doors*, read by Ger Ryan; Harris's *Enigma*, read by Stephen Thorne; Roy Castle's *Now and Then*, read by Bernard Cribbins; A.A. Milne's *The House at Pooh Corner*, read by Alan Bennett; Dirk Maggs' *Independence Day UK*, for its superb production; Dickens's *Great Expectations*, read in *bridgement* by Anton Lesser; and Hughes's *The Iron Woman*, read by the author. Reader of the Year was Juliet Stevenson.

Christina Hardyment

# Secret life of knobs and pillys

Philip Hoare does a little muck-raking on our plant life

*Flora Britannica* by Richard Mabey, Sinclair Stevenson, £30

**T**ake a suburban train out of any city or town, put down your paper and pay some attention to that green stuff at the side of the tracks. Britain's history in plants is passing you by, a bio-diverse record of human habitation: the ubiquitous vivid purple of rosebay willow herb, named fireweed because it was thrown up by the great 19th century rail network, the equally common buddleia, the butterfly bush, its tenacity in seemingly soil-less vertical cracks a reminder of its origins in the mountains of China; the sudden burst of scarlet poppies germinated from newly-disinterred seed, an echo of Flanders fields where the more deadly machinations of man enabled them to bloom. Wild plants, by definition, are everywhere: only yards from a south London station last week I saw clumps of brown velvet buterflies as rural as you like, albeit decoratively surrounded by Tennents Super beer cans.

With its "urban commons" and modern folklore, Richard Mabey's book is no update of the *Diary of an Edwardian Country Lady*. "When wild flowers are dragged willy-nilly into shampoo advertisements and state rituals, maybe it is time to ask whether the particular plants themselves have any meaning left for us, or whether they have become purely notional, registers of a fashionably Green 'life style'." Drawing on his own researches and contributions from the plant-aware public, Mabey's book is a botanical *vox pop*, a green Mass Observation: from the primeval horsetails, *Equisetaceae*, briskly updated as "Lego plants" (pull 'em apart and put 'em back together again) to the tragedy of the elms, doomed to regenerate as suckers only for Dutch Elm disease to strike again as they reach maturity, the fungus *Ceratocystis ulmi* severing their water supply and killing them through thirst.

The cycles of life and death and sex are as dramatic in botany as in the rest of creation and like any potential best-seller *Flora Britannica* has a good smattering of sex. Natural nomenclature is phallicentric enough to rival Mapplethorpe: dog's cock, priest's pilly and cuckoo pint (pint being short for pindle or penis) exhibit a rural preoccupation with matters genital. One informant tells Mabey that the youthful fishermen of the Isle of Man still used, in the 1930s, the milky sap of the sun spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia* to "get themselves excited" - hence its indelicate local name, "big knobs"; or "Saturday night pepper". Elsewhere we are told that the yellow flowers of the sweet chestnut smell distinctly of semen and that the thick furry grey leaves of the great mullein give rise to its modern appellation, the "Andrex plant". Less intimate cleansing may be had from the common nettle, which gypsies grasp by the stem and pull through work-smeared hands; the effect is also supposed to prevent against

arthritis. The Romans used nettles in "therapeutic self-flagellation" to warm up the circulatory system in our chilly climate and in the First World War the Germans wove them into cloth. And here's a useful tip from a Devon boy on how to eat the raw leaves: "The trick is to roll them up in a special way with the tongue, making sure there is plenty of saliva to coat them."

There are elegant essays on significant trees such as yews, bollies, elms and oaks; ancient inhabitants of our land whose heartwood-decayed trunks resemble "a wooden cave system more than a tree." Mabey deftly evokes the atmosphere of plants with a particular taste for the macabre: the Gothic tracery of ivy, the surreal weirdness of the giant bogweed, the sinister, malodorous henbane which supplied Dr Crippen with the means to his poisonous ends. A fig tree grows out of a Watford grave, "originated in a snack taken by the unfortunate occupant." His use of art,

literature and allusion is illuminating: Ruskin on the field poppy as "painted glass; it never glows so brightly as when the sun shines through it." But Mabey is eminently able to match such poetry, describing the delicate beauty of the hound's tongue, its flowers a "colour whose tone is more like that of dyed fabric - worn purple velvet, perhaps - than a bloom. The 17th-century herbalist John Pecchey described them as 'sordid red'."

Inevitably, folk tales abound in Mabey's account, but with startlingly modern correlations, vividly illustrated by a chap who has a nasty brush with a chain-saw. In an episode straight out of *Casualty*, the intrepid victim cycles four miles to a comfrey-plant place, digs up some of the plant root and scrapes it into a thick paste which sets hard and eventually drops off, leaving our hero with a "surprisingly small scar." The intoxicating properties of plants are well covered, but foraging druggies will be disappointed: opium poppies just don't make enough latex in our climate and legally field-grown cannabis hasn't got the THC to get you high. In one anecdote, the book describes a police raid on a secondary school where they confiscated a horse chestnut sapling, confusing its finger-like leaves for those of *Cannabis sativa*.

If you want to know what Berkshire schoolchildren use for itching powder (crushed plane seeds) or what cured George III's insomnia (hops), the details are all here, exquisitely illustrated and elegantly edited. But the cumulative effect of this body of knowledge is ultimately humbling: less about what use we can put plants to than the intrinsic sanctity of nature itself. In the habitat unfriendly late 20th century, this can no longer be merely a moot point; and those who would seek to plough through the water meadows of Solihbury should be force fed *Flora Britannica* until they see the evil of their tarmac ways.



A rural preoccupation with matters genital: Lords-and-ladies or Cuckoo pint

# Corresponding talents

Peter Parker examines a friendship that thrived on separation

*The Letters of Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh* edited by Charlotte Mosley, Hodder, £25

**I**t is surprising that Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh were friends at all. In 1929, within a year of their meeting, Mitford was closely involved in the first major crisis of Waugh's life when her chaperone of his first wife proved insufficiently vigilant to prevent She-Evelyn embarking on an affair while He-Evelyn was in the country writing *Vile Bodies*. Their friendship received another setback in 1933, when Mitford married Peter Rodd, a charming but incorrigibly adulterous wastrel, whom Waugh looked upon with profound distaste. Apparently unable to profit by experience, Mitford fell out of this disastrous marriage into the arms of another energetic womaniser, Colonel Gaston Palewski, whom, to Waugh's incredulous dismay, she followed back

to his native France at the end of the war. But the Waugh-Mitford friendship worked best when they were apart. It resulted in some 500 letters, almost every one of which is published in this volume.

As correspondents they have two distinct advantages: they had a great many friends in common, and they held widely divergent beliefs. When Waugh, who had settled in Gloucestershire, asked Cyril Connolly to supply him with London gossip, Connolly replied stiffly that he "did not regard the sufferings of his fellow men as the subject of humour". The same could not be said of either Waugh or Mitford, and many of the funniest letters describe (with baroque embellishment) the misfortunes of mutual acquaintances - notably Connolly himself, whose

amorous adventures, and the strain they put upon his health and finances, are an unceasing source of merriment. Similar exaggeration is seen in the adversarial positions each took up on opposite sides of the Channel. Mitford adored France and constantly harped on its superiority in every way to England. The anglo-maniac Waugh insisted that he loathed the place. A would-be Tory squire, he affected to believe that Mitford was a rabid communist, or at the very least someone who had worked for the triumph of socialism in England only to flee its consequences. (Even Diana Mosley, who had been interned during the war as a fascist, refused to regard her sister's politics as anything other than "synthetic coyness".) Much of the energy of the correspondence is generated by these differing views.

Mitford's letters outnumber Waugh's by about one third. Her style is almost identical with (could it have suggested?) that of the "young lady of leisure" whose excitedly semi-literate letters form the narrative of Waugh's 1932 story "Cruise". Charlotte Mosley has added apostrophes, corrected spelling and tidied up punctuation "where necessary to the sense", and while this detracts somewhat from the reader's sense of Mitford's pell-mell reportage, one can still see why Waugh spent so much time playing the schoolmaster. "The punctuation is pitiable," he wrote of a manuscript she had submitted to his scrutiny, "but it never becomes unintelligible so I just shouldn't try. It is clearly not your subject-

like theology." Mitford did her best to get religion right, but this proved difficult with someone as finicking as Waugh. His letter of rebuke over an article in which she innocently misrepresented the cause of a priest's departure from the church opened "My dear Nancy" rather than the customary "Darling Nancy", continued with a lecture on Catholic procedure, and concluded by warning her off writing about the church at all: "Your intrusions into this strange world are always fatuous." Mitford was quite capable of standing up to this sort of bullying nonsense. "Don't start my Dear Nancy I don't like it," she replied by return (an example, incidentally, of the creative power of bad punctuation). "I can't agree that I must be debarrd from ever mentioning anything to do

with your creator. Try & remember that he also created me." She concluded, "I don't defend my inaccuracies but it's your TONE that nettles me." And no wonder. Her next communication wickedly informed Waugh that two priests had written to her on the subject and she was "surprised by the illiterate look of these postcards - you would say an electrician, or seed merchant". In one celebrated article for the *Sunday Times* she compared Rome with "a village, with its one post office, one railway station and life centred round the vicarage." These were so clearly leases that not even the cantankerous Waugh could take offence.

There is plenty in these letters to cause apoplexy amongst the serious minded. Frivolity, snobbery and *schadenfreude* abound along with disparaging references to all races and creeds (including the English). Much of this is for effect and, as Mosley notes, these letters "were written to amuse, distract or tease". "Are you shrieking?" Mitford would ask Waugh after relaying some particularly choice anecdote. Well, not exactly - though the book is certainly enjoyable and in places very funny indeed. One senses, however, that Waugh and Mitford were shrieking. These are the letters of people who were not terribly happy. Although Mitford made light of it, her one-sided romance with Palewski caused her considerable unhappiness, while Waugh's disillusionment with the world, though comically exaggerated, was genuine enough. "You still have the gift of seeing people as funny which I lost somewhere in the highlands of Scotland circa 1943," he wrote despondently towards the end of 1950. This book provides substantial evidence to the contrary, but one's final impression is of two people caring for each other's entertainment on the edge of an abyss.



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# Shades of the green room

Sheridan Morley revels in a dose of theatrical gossip

*Scratch an Actor* by Ned Sherrin, Sinclair Stevenson, £15.99  
*Sherrin's Year* by Ned Sherrin, Virgin, £16.99

**I**t is going to be still more difficult than usual this Christmas to walk into any bookshop without stumbling over bits of Ned Sherrin: no less than five books out this month alone, of which three need not detain us long - two paperback reprints of his recent anthologies, an *Oxford Book of Humorous Quotations* (£7.99) and *Theatrical Anecdotes* (Virgin, £7.99), plus *Remembrance* (Michael Joseph, £17.50), a collection

of memorial service readings chosen and introduced by Sherrin in his role as *The Oldie's* memorial correspondent. The other two books are new: his first novel, and a diary of 1996. The novel, *Scratch an Actor*, ("and you'll find an actress" is the other half of that Dorothy Parker quotation) is a backstage chronicle set in Coronation Year, full of showbiz gossip for which a fictional background has been chosen as Sherrin's

only alternative to the libel suits. But let's not forget that Sherrin's first great part, Caryl Brahms, gave him a sharp training in the art of the comic theatrical novel and, 40 years later, her master-class has paid off. Sherrin has a precise wit and an invaluable green room recall: the ghosts of the Red-graves (notably Sir Michael's father Roy) and the shadows of Gielgud and many other Shaftesbury Avenue figures

from the Fifties hover about this story of an actor-manager trying to cobble together a musical out of Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*. But *Scratch an Actor* is more than just a fictional recycling of green room gossip: Sherrin is sharp enough to come up with a plot all his own, only using other people's half-told tales when they genuinely fit his narrative. All in all, this is one of the best comic novels of the theatre I've read, and just

about the most accurate. His diary, surprisingly for so careful a chronicler of stage stories, is sometimes a little less meticulous; some appalling proof reading gives us mis-spellings of Noel Willman, Benn Levy and George Siles and a lengthy story about Paul Scofield and Gladys Cooper in *The Holly & The Ivy* might work better if either of them had ever appeared in it, together or separately: the play in question here was, ironi-

cally, Wymard Brown's *A Question of Fact*. On the upside, we get some wonderful examples of Ned's quixotic ebullience, the unbelievable information that Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth once starred in the South African *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, and a daily log of footlights, first nights and other frolics which will be of infinite value to any 21st-century social historian trying to assess what it was like to be around

the West End in the late 90s. Like Agate's *Egos*, the Sherrin diaries deserve to run into at least nine or ten volumes, so full are they of great gossip and surprising revelation: Ned here outs himself with commendably casual references to "feasting with panthers" (as Wilde always described his gay encounters) but he is closer to Chips Channon than Alan Clark in his private priorities. A good party, a good play, a good meal and only then, perhaps, a bit of the other. It would have taken most of us five years to get through a diary like this and remain as buoyant at the end of it: and Sherrin is 65 and comes from a farm in Somerset, almost the only facts you won't discover in this revealing chronicle.



# Rosaries and ovaries

Carol Birch reads a harrowing tale of rural Irish angst

Down by the River by Edna O'Brien, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £15.99

A "scutty little sheep farmer" in his decrepit mountain home wields a nicotine mobile phone beneath a picture of the Pope. Crazy women launch into Old Testament rants and young girls, giggly in the locked fastness of an adolescent bedroom, shave their pubic hairs and read about orgasms. "Rosaries and ovaries", as a local doctor wryly comments, "I don't know which does the most damage to this country." It is of course, modern rural Ireland bizarre and schizoid as ever in Edna O'Brien's latest novel. "In the sockets of the eyes different densities of dread," broods the knotty prose, "They know without knowing." In this dark and harrowing tale, the appalling truth is concealed like worms under a stone.

The story is familiar. Mary MacNamara, a young girl of 14 or so, is sexually abused by her father, James, a pathetic and manipulative man whose needy nature both attracts and repels the daughter who has become the centre of his craven universe. Following her mother's death from cancer, Mary becomes pregnant and runs away to England to get an abortion. She is brought back amid a dreadful blaze of publicity, made a ward of court, and, refusing to implicate her father, forced to continue with the pregnancy. Politicians and lawyers discuss her case, as does the general public through the medium of radio phone-ins to which the hapless child, like the fox tossed about by the pack, listens in horror.

The book heaves with the imagery of corruption. An encounter with a ladybird, a creature prey to parasitic infestation, is a reminder that even closeness has its dangers: "I'll make a hole in your armour and then I'll eat you from inside," says Sister Aquinas at the convent which has become a kind of sanctuary to the child Mary.

This in turn reminds us of the cancer that is slowly and painfully destroying her mother, and is later echoed in the baby itself. An alien within, a creature of near horror, it is identified variously with the disease, with lies, and, grotesquely, with a malevolent suicidal fish forced upon Mary as a pet by the anti-abortion harpies who keep watch over the established pregnancy. "You wouldn't kill it, would you?" they wheedle. "Once you see a little soul struggling for life..."

Mary sees only its "small black unfeeling bead" of an eye, the expression "one of spite". The implication clearly is of a deep rot at the very core of the society which spawned it.

What a joyless Ireland this is that we are shown. Nothing of the vigour and buntour and richness of the place is allowed to intrude upon the pervading gloom.

## Young, gifted and worrying about the footie

Helen Stevenson reads a boys' own tale of frogs in the tandoori and toe nails in the tea

Time for Bed by David Baddiel, Little, Brown, £14.99

If I'm interested in football and I love funny men, by rights I ought at least not to dislike David Baddiel. And if I like David Baddiel, I ought to be just crazy about Gahriel Jacoby, who is standing in for David Baddiel here, because this is a novel and not a comedy routine. You know that, because it comes between covers and costs £14.99. Otherwise it's much the same, except there is no infectious laughter here, no peer pressure to giggle and identify. A reader is harder to please than a member of an audience.

One of the conceits of the new holo persona of which David Baddiel, among others, has become the spokesman, is a deep rooted insecurity about the world, women, and his team's chances of league success, all wrapped up in the ironic bashfulness of the man who is just loud enough to recognise that what he's really worried about is whether he's any good in bed. Here's the straight answer:

any man who talks about himself this much can't be.

Gahriel is Jewish, insomniac, anxious to be seen to be educated in spite of himself, nervous, sentimental, in love with his half-brother's sister Alice, who is black. He doesn't have a job at the start of the novel, and makes the occasional trip to the job centre to sign on, until he gets his arm twisted to write a trendy sports column for a glossy magazine. He may be capable of deep felt emotions towards women, which are meant to make us feel he is as enlightened, somewhere in his heart, as he is priapic in his trousers, but his compassion and sensitivity do not impede on his conception of the world outside his own. An employee in the job centre is ridiculed for his ordinary sadness and hopelessness; the only real reference in the novel to a member of the labouring classes reads as follows: "I'm not sure it's possible for the labouring classes to consume any other leverage



Edna O'Brien: the pervading gloom of a joyless Ireland

PHOTOGRAPH: HARRIS/THE TIMES/REX

passages describing the hard, beautiful landscape, and in the characters themselves.

We are dealing with archetypes. Here the lonely Irish hard, there the chorus of wailing women. As for Mary - "She's every woman" in the words of a popular song that crops up more than once, and as such becomes so much a symbol that we lose her. Like the anonymous women we read about in the newspapers, we engage with her situation rather than her individuality. This, in fact, is precisely the

point of the book. No-one in all the hubbub of conflicting voices sees the real human being at the centre of this nightmare, and neither do we. Mary is the invisible eye of the storm, the suffering innocent destroyed by bigotry, a very Irish archetype.

Ironically, we get to know her father far better. "A very beaten man says a neighbour", but this is something of a euphemism. A terrifying mixture of weakness and brutality, James weeps with loneliness, rages at fate, depeeds

like a baby on his wife and Mary, and blusters like the bully he is. His desperate yearning for his daughter is only surpassed by the bottomless pit of his own self-pity. And because he is more real than Mary, it seems a strange injustice when we come to realise that he, in fact, is the tragic figure of the book. For Mary will survive - at the end her voice rises strong and true. The hidden blights - cancer, a baby - are nothing to the soul's own weakness, destroying from within.



Baddiel: new bloke persona

(than tea), just as it seems to be part of the social contract they have struck with us bourgeois that, as they mend things in our houses, we must make them endless cups of the stuff." I read this sentence several times. I read it ironically, and

straight, I read it post-ironically and I read it critically, and I still could not think how it had crept into a novel by one of Britain's major comedians. I could phrase that indirect question differently, of course.

I don't ask that men grow up to be serious. It's just a bit dull if the jokes remain the same 15 years on. For a woman, the football has to be good and the jokes have to be funny. It's quality that counts, not just how long you hang on about it. At times there was even a distinctly sub-Wodehousian tone, circumlocution being the last refuge of the man who isn't sure he's made a joke: "Had Dr Johnson been there at that point he would have noted my expression, got out his quill, opened his enormous compendium and completely rewritten his definition of the word 'blankly'."

A good read? Maybe. I wasn't bored, but I wasn't moved either, except occasionally to a slight

smile. There are some good jokes, a lot of bad ones, a sort of plot, an extended description of anal sex, a flatmate relationship gone wrong, frogs in the tandoori and toe nails in the tea, the occasional striking *apertu*, a Jewish funeral and a lot of presuppositions about the kind of things graduates think are funny.

The problem is that in this kind of genre humour, there is no room for eccentricity, only for types. Humour does depend on types, to a certain extent. But surely in a novel they need to be flexed and modulated to create character, otherwise you end up boring your reader. David Baddiel must know this already. Contrasting two female characters, one of whom corresponds to his platonic ideal of womanhood (ie she knows everything about football) and the other who doesn't (ie she knows nothing about football) is eventually allows the latter to emerge as the more interesting and subtle character.

## E-mailing the yeti

Nick Wroe treks after the abominable snowman

Esau by Philip Kerr, Chatto, £15.99

Philip Kerr's seventh novel, opens with Jack Furness, Rhodes Scholar and mountaineer, finding a skull while climbing in the Himalayas. He gives it to his ex-girlfriend, Dr Stella ("Just call me Swift") Swift, who wastes no time in getting her colleagues to sign confidentiality waivers before organising an expedition to Nepal to investigate. The skull is abnormally young and Swift, a paleoanthropologist whose tenure review is imminent, knows a main chance when she sees one.

So far so predictable and we're all ready for an Indiana Jones-type caper featuring the abominable snowman with additional spice courtesy of an India/Pakistan nuclear stand-off and the infiltration of the expedition by an unhinged CIA operative. But Kerr usually gives more than straight up and down thrills. While his books are popular and get sold to film companies for enormous amounts of money, he also deals seriously with science and technology and enthusiastically engages with ethical and philosophical issues. *Esau* typifies this in that amongst the hi-jinx in the snow, Kerr takes on the biggest theme of all - the origin of species.

We learn that humans and chimps share 98.4% of their DNA; that is closer than a chimp is to a gorilla. When we come across yetis in the Himalayas we find that they share over 99% of their DNA with humans and to this reader at least, the point that they are just like us is well made. The description of a yeti birth, the infant being delivered by forceps adapted from two spoons, being eerily reminiscent of events personally witnessed at close quarters in Lewisham hospital only a couple of years ago.

That said, it's not all David Attenborough and epistomies and the reader is quickly brought up to intellectual speed so as to appreciate properly the importance of this discovery of a new species of man.

We are told about the Pitdown Man scam (dodgy amateur archaeologist fused a human cranium to an orang-utan's jaw to fool the scientific establishment in 1912), the history and theory of radiocarbon dating (the standard textbook is Sacher's

*Stratigraphic Geology and Relative Age Measurement*) and that the tripod-mounted Canon EOS 5 is the paleoanthropologist's camera of choice, especially when used with Fuji Realia film.

I have no idea if any of the above is true but it sounds authentic which is good enough. Sadly the same can't always be said of the dialogue. Swift is prone to make statements such as, "Electron Spin Resonance, that's where you measure the energy of the electrons trapped in the denial enamel." To which the inevitable rejoinder is, "Yeah. You obtain a date for the material from the ratio between that and the trapping rate."

But after leaving the lab for the mountains the story skips along fluently and the episodes high above the snow-line are more compulsively page-turning and the conjunction of the unpolished environment with the explorer's hi-tech kit is stylishly handled. The silent arrival of e-mails soon becomes as sinister as the more conventional all-action skulduggery.

Kerr has structured his story well, effectively underpinning the narrative with wider scientific and philosophical concerns. As the origins of the human race are uncovered so the world comes closer to nuclear Armageddon. The wavering atheism of a scientist early in the book is mirrored by the intervention of a benign swami towards the end. Possibly with an eye to a suitably monumental film score, the scientist's crisis of faith is played out to a soundtrack of Hayden's *Creation*. Meanwhile the swami has to make do with sounding like Prince Charles on a bad day, muttering about how "a leaf does not turn brown and die without the whole tree knowing".

*Esau* has already been sold to Disney and will be screened in three years time. While Jack Furness may have referred dismissively to "abominable snowman bullshit" early in the book, Dr Swift, like Kerr, probably has her finger closer to the popular pulse with her assertion that "the public's appetite for popular science meant that there was a new theory about Man and his origins every week". Let's hope for Kerr's sake the public's appetite is still as voracious in 1999.

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# le Carré

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## Paperbacks

By Christopher Hirst and Lucasta Miller

**Napoleon & Josephine** by Evangeline Bruce (Phoenix, £9.99) Subtitled "An Improbable Marriage" (not least because Josephine preferred tall men), this tremendous work is a domestic drama played out on a world stage. As a child in Martinique, Josephine displayed an "indolence...remarkable even in that climate", yet she married one of the world's great men of action. Though always "taking the path of least resistance", she led a life of scarcely credible eventfulness, briefly becoming Empress (her love of fashion and profligacy with money may bring modern

parallels to mind) before being discarded by her charmless partner.

**Mind Readings: Writers' Journeys Through Mental States** edited by Sara Dunn, Blake Morrison and Michele Roberts (Minerva, £7.99) Depression is the writer's occupational hazard, and this collection of essays, poems, stories and confessions by well-known authors - published to mark the 50th anniversary of the mental health charity, Mind - explores the dark side of the psyche from a myriad of

different angles. High- (or if you prefer, low-) lights include Rosie Boycott laying bare her alcoholism, Zoe Heller in praise of Prozac and Wendy Cope's hilarious analysis of her relationship with her shrink.

**Darwin's Dangerous Idea** by Daniel C. Dennett (Penguin, £9.99) Endlessly stimulating, this extended advocacy of full-blown Darwinism ("the best single idea anyone has ever had") is a glorious *tour de force*. Utilising analogies ranging from Borges' *Library of Babel* to the use of spandrels in

architecture, Dennett hammers home the ineluctable fact that Darwin explained the world - and everything discovered since supports his theory. What we hypothesise as God is "something dogged and mindless". Dennett's lucid exegesis of this "dangerous idea" is uncompromising and revelatory.

**Junk Mail** by Will Self (Penguin, £7.99) Reading one article by Will Self can be exhilarating, but a whole book of them seems rather too much of a good thing. Cool and pseud by turns, his prose crackles with wit one minute and irritates the next. Nearly half the pieces in this collection of journalism are about drug abuse - gritty reportage rather than flights of philosophical fancy - but other

subjects range from the author's lucubrations concerning an operation on his penis to interviews with Damien Hirst and J G Ballard.

**Looking for George** by Helena Drysdale (Picador, £6.99) As a student in 1979, Drysdale had a dangerous fling with an Orthodox priest in Romania. In subsequent letters, George risked voicing his hatred of the Ceausescu regime and asked Drysdale to marry him so he could flee. Suddenly, he ceased to write. Prompted by guilt, she returned to Romania in the aftermath of the 1989 revolution only to discover that George had died, a political prisoner in a mental hospital. Drysdale's quest has resulted in a brooding work of undeniable passion.



# travel & outdoors

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The Washington Memorial

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Capital games

Simon Calder gets on the tourist circuit in Washington DC

A salvo of Arctic wind blasts through the city, prompting the people to set their collars a notch or two higher against the cold – and their fellow citizens.

"Don't rush me!" pleads the homeless man, clutching a plastic cup on one of the grubbier street corners. "One donation at a time, please." In the capital of the world's sole superpower, even the down-and-outs possess a politician's slick patter.

The best time to visit Washington DC is highly specific: October. In years that are divisible by four, the year is crucial because the pulse in this most competitive of cities races when presidential and congressional elections take place in the same year; the month is critical because everything is auspicious for the tourist, political or not.

This month, a swathe of CNN Canadian (as the TV forecaster call it) swept into town early, bringing the first frosts. So the last few casual visitors of the summer have shivered back to Illinois and Iowa, leaving a city beautifully exposed beneath sharp, clear skies. And the chill has tripped the magical maple mechanism that inflames the woodland benignly fringing Washington DC.

Those initials hint at the thorough artificiality of the American capital. The District of Columbia is bounded by an arbitrary diamond inscribed half way down the US east coast, punched out of the map where Maryland and Virginia meet. It began life as a messy compromise, perched on a swampy piece of land on the cusp of North and South spheres of influence.

Geometrically and politically, its centre is a large white house. The lower left-hand corner of DC has been ripped away, a result of the state of Virginia clawing back its territory in the middle of the last century. Into this crazy diamond has been decanted all the machinery of government, but not much else that you would associate with a real city.

If you're not a politician, or homeless, about the only role to play in DC is to be a tourist. It is a giant governmental

theme park. Three things apply to almost everything in the city that is relevant to your stay: it is probably a tourist attraction; it should be free; and it is almost certainly on the left-hand half of the diamond. This western side is full of bright and tidy young things with perfect teeth; sex, drugs and rock-n-roll are kept behind firmly closed doors. But the east is an urban battleground that keeps Washington a leading contender for the title of murder capital USA. So with your self-preservation compass correctly aligned, off you go.

First, arrive in style – the largest railway station in the world will do nicely. If you fly into Baltimore-Washington airport, the connecting train ejects you beneath a vast, gloomy canopy. But this is a mere vestibule for the grand hall of heroic proportions, a Beaux Arts bonanza in marble and terracotta. A nation built largely on the railroad needed to accord the lines of steel with proper respect, to terminate them in a temple to the train. This foundation has largely crumbled with the decline of the railway in America – to the extent that trains provide the flimsiest of justifications for the continued existence of Union Station. So the shopkeepers have moved in. The list of specialty shops is much longer these days than the train timetable. If you need to buy a rail ticket, mind, you face a challenge to locate the booking office amidst all the retail opportunities. To add to the confusion, this month the station hosted an Oktoberfest – the chance for the German community boozily to celebrate its roots.

Almost everyone in Washington is from somewhere else, and most – from presidents to panhandlers – are planning to return there sometime. So in a bid to establish a sense of permanence, the city has built a series of monumental structures, of which Union Station is merely the opening bid. Next door is the former Post Office. No parcel-despatching activity echoes these days around the cathedral-like hall. But down in the vaults, a new Postal Museum traces the fall of

the US Mail from the communication network for a nation to a second-rate alternative to e-mails and fax. You can ponder the impermanence, and get a machine to print out all the neatly addressed postcards you need, for free. That's because the museum is part of the Smithsonian Institution.

If you have "been there, seen that" in Washington DC, you will already refer to the Smithsonian whenever polite conversation allows. If you have not, you may be puzzled about what precisely it is. The Institution was founded in 1826 by James Smithson, a British scientist who was the worst kind of tourist – he didn't visit Washington until he was dead. Smithson was an illegitimate child, and despised the way that the British upper classes treated him. So he decided to bestow financial favour on the intellectual health of the young United States. He established an Institution for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge among men".

The upshot, these days, is 14 different museums, each providing a distinct insight into the creation of a nation. Most are located on either side of the Mall, an audacious urban open space. Pierre L'Enfant was the French architect whose grand design for the new city prescribed a broad green stripe running right through the middle of Washington, finally dissolving into the dark waters of the Potomac River. For a time, it was disrupted by a busy railway station plunked right in the middle of the lawn. Union Station solved that problem in breathtaking fashion, and the grass grew back over the tracks. Decked along it are some of the finest museums in the world.

The Air & Space Museum is almost too embracing for its own good. Every milestone, from Lindbergh's Spirit of St Louis to Apollo lunar modules, is dangled or draped around this outsized hangar. In the equation between war (symbolised by fighters and bombers) and peace (civil aircraft, plus the celebrated link-up in space between the Soviet cosmonauts and American astronauts), conflict wins easily. Enola

Gay, the aircraft responsible for more deaths than any other warplane, has a resting place in the museum, amid an exhibition on the Hiroshima atomic bomb that comprised its deadly cargo.

Death, like government and tourism, is a way of life in Washington. The sorrowful story of American violence runs through the city like a severed artery. If there is no public performance at Ford's Theater, a boy scout-like ranger of the National Park Service will show you the box where Abraham Lincoln was shot in 1865, then take you over the street to the house where he died the next morning. Across the Potomac River at Arlington Cemetery, a flame burns eternally above the tomb of another assassinated president, John F. Kennedy. Meanwhile, at the Vietnam Memorial, inscribed slabs of granite, commemorates all the young men sent to their deaths in an unwinnable war in Indochina waged by JFK's successors.

The most sombre memorial of all is the Holocaust Museum, where the story of the rise of fascism and the death of millions of Jews is told in an unblinkingly straightforward manner. Since opening two years ago, it has reduced three million visitors to tears.

Every tourist in Washington witnesses a continuum of experiences from inhumanity to showbiz. Firmly at the entertainment end of this spectrum, you find institutions of state such as the Pentagon and the FBI. Each runs a tour that is as theatrical as it is glib. The FBI sheds any semblance of sensible analysis of crime by the end of its tour, when visitors are treated to a demonstration of live firing with automatic weapons.

If you have been keeping up so far, you will have enjoyed several days of wonderment without even touching the political core of Washington. You can take the presidential trinity at a fair center. The Washington monument – at 555ft easily the tallest point in a low-rise city – pierces the profoundly blue sky and acts as a pylon around which the city can revolve. This plain stone needle also provides a

continued on page 12

### DC: the essentials

Getting there: Simon Calder paid £286 (including tax) to Major Travel (0171-485 7017) for a round-trip on British Airways from Gatwick to Baltimore-Washington airport, 30 miles north of the city. A bus/rail connection to Union Station in Washington costs \$5 each way (\$12 at weekends). BA, United Airlines and Virgin Atlantic fly from Heathrow to Dulles airport, 20 miles west. The best-placed airport, National, is three miles south and on the Metro system; unfortunately, it is not served by international services.

Staying there: see Hamish McRae's story, *A room around Washington*, on page 12.

Getting around: most places of interest to tourists are walkable (central Georgetown to the Smithsonian takes around 40 minutes). The futuristic Metro system is fast and relatively safe. A ticket allowing unlimited travel all day (after 9.30am on weekdays) costs \$5.

Getting information: with no US tourist office in the UK, it is tricky to get advice. The best city-specific guidebook is *Access Washington DC* (distributed by Harper Collins, £9.99).



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pretty good view of the ensemble, with a lift that zips you to the top. If you want to descend on foot through the interior, and see the stone presented by each state to be set into the austere walls, turn up at 10am on a Saturday and ask for the "Walk-down tour".

Want to see Bill Clinton's front room (at least for a couple more months)? A century ago, it was traditional for the president personally to receive visitors and shake the hand of each one. Nowadays, the White House tour involves hours of queuing for the modest privilege of trotting around some of the public areas.

You may be better off gliding across

the area known as Adams-Morgan. This is where every wave of new immigrants seems to settle and set up restaurants, providing a choice between Peruvian and Vietnamese, Salvadoran and Ethiopian. I was pleased to find the Meskrem, where I ate an Ethiopian feast four Octobers ago, is still serving deliciously simple dishes with panache. Prices around £15 with drinks – well below the DC average – allow you some spare change to give to the people left out in the cold.

New Yorkers reckon they have the city that never sleeps but I have proof that they are not alone. On my last night I finished work at 5am, and an hour later found myself sitting in a bookshop trying to decide between a



to the vast Lincoln Memorial (above). A gaunt, moody statue of the murdered president keeps a distant eye on Capitol Hill. America's parliament is strangely quiet this month because one-third of the Senators and all the Representatives are back home politicking for re-election.

Most of the bureaucrats who remain beat a hasty retreat from the government offices in the city centre after 6pm – and so should you, but not too far. To hear New Yorkers disparage nightlife in Washington, you would imagine that the city becomes a power vacuum after dark. But plonk yourself at the corner of M Street and Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown (a semi-suburb a mile from the White House), and you will find the sidewalks bustle well beyond midnight. Or to meet the homeless man with a good line in pan-banding, aim north on 18th Street to

point of Old Dominion or Sierra Nevada Pale Ale. After the shop assistant/barman, wearing the wooliest of liberal sweaters, pointed out that we were in the middle of the twilight zone between 3am and 9.30am when beer cannot be served, I chose a coffee – and a book to browse through. It turned out to be a Washington DC Vehicle License Decoder, a curious publication that enables you to work out the nationality and status of anyone driving a car with diplomatic plates. The book even gives the FBI hotline for reporting suspected spies.

A most peculiar city, and one whose spiritual heart I have signally failed to locate. I suspect that the reason is that the body politic of America has never possessed a soul. Like any theme park, Washington DC offers a perversion of humankind. Don't expect inspiration. But you do get unlimited free thrills.

# A room around Washington

Hamish McRae goes hotel-hunting in DC

You may, of course, have an invitation from the President to stay at the opulent townhouse just across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, where visiting dignitaries are accommodated. But otherwise you face a tricky task to find somewhere to stay in Washington that is both interesting and inexpensive.

I do not include in this the American Youth Hostel, though *The Independent's* travel editor tells me it is unbeatable value at \$18 a night. For financial journalists like me, visits to Washington tend to coincide with bankers' conventions, in particular the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. So journalists, on newspaper budgets, find themselves competing for accommodation with the more lavishly funded scions of the international banking community. As a result the plush hotels are fully-booked,

even if budgets would run to them. Aside from staying with friends – the nicest option – that leaves only two alternatives.

One is to stay in one of the two main hotels of the meeting itself: the Sheraton, where the meeting actually takes place, or the Shoreham, just across the road. They are competent, enormous palaces and I have fond memories of both. But they are expensive, and the practical advantage of being on the spot, while useful when coping with lunch-time deadlines, is offset by the fact that they are both about two miles from the centre of the city: not so good if you are seeing someone at the US Treasury downtown.

The alternative is to find a small and reasonable hotel in the centre. There are several of these. The traditional haven for visiting Brits is the Tabard, an "old world" place in a converted 19th-century

town house, with three advantages: no TVs in the room, an excellent restaurant, and a location 200 yards from *The Independent's* Washington office. A variation of this theme is to stay at the Canterbury next door, which has larger modern rooms, but eat at the Tabard.

My own preferred solution, however, is not to stay at a regular hotel at all but instead have a serviced flat. A chain, now called Doubletree Guest Suites, operates a chain of these and has one at 2500 Pennsylvania Avenue, just before you cross the bridge into Georgetown. So it is 10 minutes to the restaurants of Georgetown in one direction and 15 minutes to the White House in the other.

For the price of middle-rank hotel (just over \$100 a night earlier this month) you get a sitting-room with a sofa-bed, a bedroom with two double beds, a kitchen and

a bathroom. We crammed our family of four there a few years back when my wife was doing a consultancy job at the World Bank and felt like a family visit. You do not get a restaurant, a grand lobby, bell-boys dressed in Ruritanian uniforms and all the other irritating things of hotels these days. But you do get breakfast in your sitting-room and if you want a meal the Italian restaurant round the corner delivers. Not quite a home from home, but the best solution I have found to the problem of Washington accommodation.

The code for Washington is 001 202. American Youth Hostel, 737 2333. Canterbury Hotel, 393 3000. Doubletree Guest Suites, 785 2000. Omni Shoreham Hotel, 234 0700. Sheraton Washington, 328 2000. Tabard Inn, 785 1277.



## something to declare

### trouble spots

Reports for travellers to the former Eastern bloc

Moscow, Russia (right): "One common scam by airport 'taxis' is for the driver to fake an engine failure half-way to the city. He will ask you to push the car to get it going. When you do, the car starts and he drives away with your luggage." – *Russia by Rail*, by Athol Yates (Bradt, £13.95).

Kaliningrad, Russia: "The more intrepid could consider the broad gauge line which runs from Braniewo to Kaliningrad, but its reputation as a route for smuggling makes it an unwise choice for Western passengers." – *Ibid*.

Georgia: "In Mestia and Ushguli we stay in local farmers' houses... toilet facilities are primitive and there are no showers or bathtubs." –



Description of the Kingdoms of Georgia tour operated by the British Museum Traveller (0171-323 8895).

Poland: "The road accident rate is due to poor roads... badly loaded trucks and a disturbingly high tendency for drunkenness. To combat this there are ridiculously low speed limits and a very keen police force." – *Planet Talk*, free from Lonely Planet (0181-742 3161).

### visitors' book

Washington – Symbol and City exhibition, at the Museum of Building.

This should be the first place to visit to understand and enjoy DC – Sandrine Le Bitan.

You have a wonderful city; take care of it – Dr Nunez.

This is a really great exhibit but

it's so dirty and scruffy. It needs some refurbishment – Anon.

Vote for Bob Dole – Bored in DC to which someone has added... Why? So he can get rid of museums like this? – Anon.

### bargain of the week

Southampton airport rarely features in this spot, but Air France has begun to include the Hampshire gateway among starting points for cheap flights worldwide. Through discount agents such as Quest Worldwide (0181-547 3322), Air France is selling return tickets to Nairobi for £345 including tax. This is for departures by 20 November,

returning home by the end of next month. To head east rather than south, then a ticket from Southampton to Beijing between 1 November and 15 December costs £426 return. Other airports from which these fares apply are Heathrow, Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh. All require a change of plane at Paris CDG.

### a likely story

"The fastest way to the heart of London" – publicity for the Gatwick Express.

Wherever the heart of London may lie, it is not at Victoria Station, where the Gatwick Express arrives from the Sussex airport. Nor is the 30-minute train ride the fastest link between the capital and Gatwick airport: Thameslink services take a minute less to reach London Bridge station. This is not the heart of London, either, but if (like many Londoners) you deem it to be Charing Cross, then a cross-platform change will get you there faster and cheaper than the Gatwick Express and a tube.

# Two FREE magazines

## 10 titles to choose from

If our great new listings guide hasn't tempted you to charge off to the cinema, gallop off to a gallery or tune in to the TV, then maybe we can entertain you with our great free magazine offer. We've joined forces with COMAG Magazine Marketing to offer readers of *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* up to two free magazines from the selection of 10 great titles shown below. Each day, we are focusing on a different one to give you a flavour of what's on offer and to help you choose the titles to suit you. So to enjoy up to £7.25 worth of great free reading all you have to do is follow the instructions below.

#### How to qualify

Numbered tokens will be printed in *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* each day until 21 October. Today we print Token 8. Simply collect four of these, ensuring that they are all differently numbered, and attach them to the application voucher. One is published today and a final one will be published in *The Independent* on Monday 21 October. Complete the application voucher indicating which magazine you would like and present it to your nearest magazine retailer.

You may claim a second free magazine by collecting a second set of four differently numbered tokens and attaching them to a second application voucher.

In the unlikely event that your chosen magazine is not available from your retailer, please be prepared to select an alternative title. The closing date for claiming your free magazine(s) is Thursday 31 October 1996.

Gramophone is the most influential record review magazine published today, drawing on the skills of some of the world's most respected critics. Gramophone offers considered comment on more than 200 recordings every month, the best of which are featured on the free CD which accompanies every issue. The November issue reveals the winners of the 1996 Gramophone Awards and the free CD features highlights from the winning recordings.



### Independent Magazine Offer Application Voucher

In order to receive your FREE magazine please complete this application voucher, attach a further three differently numbered tokens, and present it at your local retailer by Thursday 31 October 1996.



Please attach 3 additional tokens here

I would like to exchange this application voucher for one free magazine as indicated below (please tick appropriate box). Prices are for retailer reference only.

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# What the ski brochures really mean

Stephen Wood gets hooked on the small print

My friend Magnus does not have happy memories of his last skiing trip. It was a disaster. Less than a week before he left, the tour operator told him that his accommodation had to be changed: instead of a three-star hotel in the centre of the resort, he would be staying in a two-star establishment a kilometre away. On the coach transfer from the airport – having recovered that his ski had not arrived on the plane he lost his passport. The next morning, at the hire shop, he met someone who had made a booking and paid 20 per cent less for the same holiday. His own ski got to the resort two days later – with warm weather. The thaw meant that most of the lifts were closed for the rest of the week. So I made up that story. But those things happen which is why they feature in every brochure: a reminder to all the full-colour fun up front, that the small print at the back deals with the downside. From delays through to nuclear disaster. The booking conditions section (or, as I call it, 'Really dull legal stuff') details how the tour operator will put things right if your holiday goes wrong. You know it's important; but you are not a lawyer, you never wear an anorak, and you don't read small print. So I've done it for you, and I have made important discoveries on your behalf. First, they are not all the same: the small print brochures published by the six major operators differs considerably. Second, one of them has terms that the others, and third, reading (boring) conditions is addictive.

All tour operators offer compensation to clients for 'major' changes to a holiday, in accommodation, flights and so on – unless caused by force majeure, ie definitions of force majeure vary with righteously (though none of them, oddly, mentions old standby 'Acts of God'), and compensation varies, too. My imaginary friend Magnus would have pocketed £100 for accepting inferior accommodation from Thomson, much less if he had travelled with Neilson (£60), Inghams (£40), or Crystal (£20). Alternatively, of course, he could have cancelled the holiday and got a refund.

The small print is more vague about what happens if you get separated from your ski. All tour operators charge a ski-carriage fee of £12 on charter flights if your ski doesn't turn up at the other end most of them, with the notable exception of Airromance to refund the £12 – which is a bit like that 50 per cent scam of predicting the sex of a baby. Your money back if we get it wrong? The brochures all contain a rather unhelpful commitment to your ski as soon as possible, but only Thomson and Neilson also undertake to loan you ski if necessary.

Compensation for delayed ski comes with many of the insurers' insurance policies. Airromance pays out £100 to replace lost skis. Crystal only £30 – and that wide variation is characteristic of brochure policies. Although all cost the same, about £35 a week for Euro they all give you something different.

Thomson's argument (ask any small-print freak) for reading the brochures backwards, because the insurers' differ more than the holidays. Say you fancy a ski at the Hotel Aiglon in France on 8 February: do you choose between Thomson and First Choice, which both have a brochure price of £300? Scrutinise the brochures, and it's easy. If you're mildly anti-prone, you go with Thomson: its 'loss



of passport' benefit is £700, compared with the standard £250 offered by First Choice. If you're wildly accident-prone, you choose First Choice: its medical benefits are an astonishing £10m, while Thomson's are at the bottom end of the normal £2.5m range.

The fashionable insurance to have this year is piste-closure cover – it even appears at the front of some brochures. First Choice, Airromance, Inghams and Crystal include the cover in their brochure insurance: the best offer is Airromance's, with travel to an alternative skiable area when 80 per cent of your

resort's lifts are closed for lack of snow – or, if that's impossible, £30 per day compensation instead. Both Neilson and Thomson, however, include the driving around in search of snow in the cost of the holiday (although you need insurance to qualify for compensation). Take a calculator if you have First Choice's insurance because it only kicks in when 85 per cent of the lifts are closed; don't bother if you're insured with Crystal or Inghams, because they require that the whole resort be shut down.

If you start a brochure at the front, you probably

also think the prices are the most important thing in it. And there's another argument for starting at the back. What does the small print say about prices printed in the brochure? Essentially, that they may be correct, or they may not, so ask your travel agent before booking. Once you have booked, however, all operators guarantee that the price will not change – except for Thomson. It admits that the price could go down, 'if we reduce the total price of a holiday after you have booked it, we will charge you the new lower price'.

If that isn't quite all it seems (it wouldn't apply

if the lower price were for a subtly different holiday), it's a good offer – like everything else in Thomson's back pages. True, the print is not very small, which makes them a bit accessible; and there are weird nuggets like Crystal's off-hand 'ski boots above size 9 may not be available in Romania'. But I was impressed, and said so to Thomson's product manager for skiing, Ian Sinkins. He was as pleased as Shakespeare would be if you told him you adored his stage directions. Great! I was impressed by the one part of his brochure that nobody reads.

## In search of snow

Bill Jarrroughs on weather variations

EW autumn, keen to anxiously await the first snow in the Alps, what is to come. The week has been stormy, the Alps, but the erratic seasons of the last 100 years are sufficient to justify this concern. And although the last few years have produced adequate snow records, the spectre of global warming still does many skiers' nightmares.

Thin of dry years around end of the 1980s were as the harbinger of a wet climate. Indeed, 1994 looked set to repeat this term, with record-breaking warmth in November a death of snow. These huge falls of early snow set things up for what proved to be a bumper season, with cold, dry conditions rather than warmth, got season off to a poor start and subsequent snowfalls modest, especially in the north, despite the fact that this was a distinctly odd year.



Photograph: Peter McDiarmid

that higher temperatures have outweighed the effect of increased precipitation and reduced the amount of snowfall, cutting the length of the season a bit.

Incidentally, statistics collected since the 1930s in California for the purposes of managing water resources tell the same story. Despite a warming trend, seasonal snowfall in the Sierra Nevada has, if anything, increased over the last 60 years.

Statistics for the Alps also provide insights into the shorter term variations in snowfall. On every timescale, the key word is erratic. Runs of good years can be followed by a series of poor seasons, or a bad year, such as 1969, being followed by the bumper falls of 1970. Within

any season, the same story applies, as the sudden improvement in January 1985 demonstrated, or conversely, after the magnificent falls of the autumn of 1992, there was nearly two months of drought before further snow gave a good end to the season.

There is no identifiable rhyme or reason to these fluctuations. Despite the impression of a pattern in the variations over the years, there are no reliable cycles that can be used to predict whether any year will be good or bad. Similarly, within any season, the shifts between settled, dry sunny periods and stormy, snowy intervals are unpredictable more than a few days ahead.

Examination of tempera-

ture records for the Alps show that snowy years do not necessarily feature cold winters. Much more important is the amount of precipitation. It follows that cold, dry winters such as 1964 can be just as disastrous as mild, dry ones such as 1989, and last year nearly fell into this category.

The ideal combination is a cold and stormy late autumn and early winter, such as those that set up the seasons of 1981/82 or 1992/93; followed by a relatively mild dry winter with plenty of settled, sunny weather to enable skiers to exploit the ample snow. By way of contrast, if the weather gets very cold, as spells of January 1987 and February 1991 demonstrated, it can be too bitter in the Alps

to enjoy the snow in the high resorts.

Basic guidelines for skiers in search of snow remain the same – best options are the high resorts in high season. But at the lower resorts, especially those below 1000 metres (3300 feet) in Austria and below 1250 metres (4100 feet) in the French Alps, you may get little snow cover unless you have access to slopes above 1500 to 2000 metres (4900 to 6600 feet). Where there are not enough high-level slopes, early and late holidays are likely to become increasingly risky.

Bill Jarrroughs' book *Mountain Weather: A Guide for Skiers and Hillwalkers* is published by Coronet Press, priced at £10.99



Simon Calder

## The place where the pound is truly puny, of course, is Japan

UNLESS you have cleaned up on the stock market, financing a winter sports holiday could be an uphill struggle. With the pound slithering down on its long-term decline, you are not going to have much of an uproarious après-ski splurge with, say, £100. For such an amount, a high street bureau de change this week would give you just 780 French francs or 190 of the Swiss variety. And about that irritating need for German currency when you fly to Munich for onward transit to Austria? That £10 for the odd coffee or snack will become just 15 Deutschmarks once you pay commission charges. Increasingly, it seems that the British abroad are destined to suffer the discomfort of the chronically impecunious – unless they are emulating the initiative demonstrated by Philip Robinson of Sheffield.

"German airports are greedy," Mr Robinson writes. "Not content with charging an airport tax, they make you pay again to use the luggage trolleys." You can, however, beat the system.

"At Hamburg airport last week, I found the usual machines which swallow DM2.50 before they give you a trolley, then refund 50 pfennig when a trolley is returned." This being Germany, a lot of well-behaved travellers don't bother to collect their refund. So Mr Robinson cashed in.

"After using my trolley, I sold it to an American couple for a dollar (cutting out the middle man)." With a long wait before his flight to Manchester, Mr Robinson decided to go for it. "I strolled around the airport gallery trolleys and returning them to the machines for 50 pfennig each. I made enough for a bottle of duty-free vodka and a bar of chocolate."

Being short of a few pfennig, this column can offer only a bar of chocolate for other tales of getting the better of airport scams.

The place where the pound is truly puny, of course, is Japan. Yet even in this economic powerhouse, the Imperial family seems fit to travel by public transport – a habit that our own royals are only just beginning to acquire. Furthermore, the Japanese are quite happy for their highnesses to travel in the company of impecunious British visitors. So last month I found myself sharing a carriage with the Crown Prince and his charming wife.

The Japanese are generous to the tourist to the extent of positively subsidising visitors. For example, a week of unlimited travel on the country's bullet trains costs £167. Since a Tokyo to Kyoto return ticket alone would cost this much, it is a bargain indeed – especially when you find yourself travelling royal class.

At Morioka station, on the island of Honshu, one carriage of the 2.48pm bullet train to Tokyo was surrounded by a clump of besotted officials, a crowd of well-wishers and a mood of urgency. Suddenly, a cheer went up and the Prince and Princess appeared. Their entourage was converging on coach 10. So was I. Was there a mistake? I asked a station official. He checked my seat reservation and led me through the security cordon towards the royal couple.

They looked considerably more elegant than me; as well as a dusty old backpack, I was carrying a plastic bowl of ramen, the delicious noodle soup that station buffets dispense for a lot less than a BR sandwich. But I was not destined to share in the company of Japan's future ruler.

It turns out that the latest bullet trains are double-decker, with first class at the top; plebs like me were stuck on the lower floor, where the view is mostly of concrete embankments.

As we hurried towards the Japanese capital at 130mph, the main point of interest was the knot of secret service men guarding their shoulder holsters and the steps up to the royal pair's quarters. At each station, the security men erupted onto the platform where a group of well-wishers bowed and waved fondly to the royal couple. But as with all Japanese trains, it arrived perfectly on time in Tokyo.

The Imperial couple provided a fine example for our own royal family that it is possible to use public transport and remain dignified. This week, Buckingham Palace announced that the royal family is to use public transport rather than insisting on limousines and private aircraft. Let us travellers hope that they cause less disruption than when the Queen famously took a scheduled flight for the first time last year. Her Majesty was on her way back from the Commonwealth conference in New Zealand, but received rather better treatment than most travellers – the flight was diverted for her. The Air New Zealand plane she boarded in Auckland was the one that normally goes to Frankfurt, not London.

Luckily, Her Majesty was saved that tiresome transfer at Germany's busiest airport, since the 747 touched down specially at Heathrow – just a five-minute drive from Windsor Castle. Meanwhile, the unfortunate Frankfurt-bound passengers had an hour added to their journey because of the extra stop. And they probably had to pay DM2.50 for a luggage trolley, too.



# High time in Holland

## Anna Rockall takes the Midnight Express to Amsterdam

Nestled in the pages of *Viz*, along with the adverts for "legal highs", T-shirts emblazoned with the familiar seven-pointed leaf, and indoor growing cabinets for the horticulturally-minded, a company called Midnight Express advertises a "Smoker's Weekend" in Amsterdam. A coach takes you overnight to this watery city, drops you off at 9 in the morning on Saturday, and picks you up at 1.30 that night. The intended benefit of two consecutive nights trying to sleep on a coach heigh, presumably, that you have no accommodation costs.

You have not been at all in the car on this occasion.

Prior to embarking on this massistic venture, I couldn't think of a purer hell than being dumped in a strange city after an uncomfortable, sleepless night and being expected to take soporific drugs all day. That was before I discovered who I was to be travelling with. About half the bus was filled with a mixture of perfectly ordinary looking people – couples, a few ageing hippies, and groups of friends off for a fun weekend. But they were overshadowed by the lads at the back of the bus; drunk, stoned, noisy, abusive and sexist, to name just a few of their sins – they sported skinheads and a bad attitude. A Dutch friend tells me that it is these men that the infamous Amsterdam prostitutes dislike the most, because of the way they burp and fart at inopportune moments.

The company's introductory description of its trips, so to speak, says: "We want you to feel that you are in Amsterdam the moment you step aboard our coach, and just like in the Amsterdam coffee shops, we play music..." And just like in the Amsterdam coffee shops, dope is smoked whilst on board. Within two minutes of getting on the coach, the first wreaths of perfumed smoke drifted over. Although the introduction does not mention drugs, it does ask "that you are considerate to other passengers when you smoke, so if the people sitting near you are not smoking, you should at least offer them some!"

Going through UK formalities on to the ferry was surprisingly trouble-free considering the coach reeked of illegal



### Amsterdam's Bull Dog café

**Photograph: Gavin Milverton/Impact**

substances, but we were let through unhindered. Having crossed the Channel, most people tried to get some sleep, their heads balanced uncomfortably on anything that offered support until we were

As we stumbled out of the bus and stood in a daze on the street, wondering which direction to head in, the highly motivated

lager louts — or in this case ganja louts — jumped out and looked at us mockingly. "What the fuck are you standin' about for? Goin' to do some fuckin' sightseeing?" With deepest scorn.

Then they goose-stepped off, no doubt to the nearest den of iniquity. The rest of us also went to a nearby coffee shop, where for some reason everybody apart from myself thought the best antidote to a

sleepless night and a strong desire to  
had for 24 hours was several largiffs.

Not being a smoker on a grandie, I had decided to hold out until the ring but despite my best intentions, unc-  
cumbent to a few drags of Super nk. Although this sounds like a social use, I have to admit it was rather delight. It made me feel slightly comatose, but n't take much so was still able to artine when asked a simple and direct ques-  
In fact, it led to some rather interg effects at the Van Gogh museum. It was my next port of call.

The Van Gogh museum is a wonderful gem of a gallery—not overcrowded, big, like the Rijksmuseum—and so beautifully laid out in three large rooms. These are mainly devoted, of course, to Van Gogh but also exhibiting some of the paintings of the same period. We had a couple of puffs I had before going. There is a life-size bronze statue in the museum—*Farmer by Jules Galois*—which from a distance is as evocative as you would expect of a bronze statue: stolid. But close up, I could have sworn it was breathing.

After a full day of debauchery, the drinkers all met up, somewhat inebriated for wear, and piled unwillingly into the coach for the return journey. His time nearly everybody – and certainly the ladies at the back – went straight to sleep after a quick joint.

We didn't wake up until we reached the ferry. We passed customs without any problems, and there was a wonderful lighting-up of joints as soon as we were through - still in sight of the customs building. Perhaps it was a celebration of a safe passage, perhaps it was simply to help us get back to sleep again, but seemed to me like a big V-sign to anarchy, and out-dated law.

*The Midnight Express (012696363) coach to Amsterdam leaves a Friday evening from Manchester at London, price £38. The next available is 1 November.*

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# The low country on wheels

The Netherlands is perfect for a half-term cycling holiday. By Christian Wolmar

**Y**ou must be mad," we were told several times when we said we were taking the whole family, including the three children - Molly, 16, Pascoe, 12, and Misha, six - off for a week's cycling holiday. The sceptics were proved, utterly wrong.

A cycling touring holiday is not unlike a skiing one, without the potential for much *après-cycle* activities. You spend all day on a relatively strenuous activity and you slump down in the evening too exhausted to do anything other than eat, drink and play cards.

There is, of course, one big difference. For skiing, you look for the steepest mountains. For cycling, particularly with kids and unfit urban dwellers, you look for the flattest land. And that really means the Netherlands, apart from a few bits of Belgium and Denmark.

We took the ferry from Harwich to Hook of Holland, which is conveniently placed to give access to any part of the country. Arranging this was not as easy as might have been expected. When I rang up Stena to book the five of us, they tried to charge us a total of £272, nearly a third more than if we had just taken a car, although they stressed that "the bicycles are free, sir". It was only when I phoned British Rail that I discovered there was a £49 Apex return fare to anywhere on the Dutch rail network using the boat train from Liverpool Street to Harwich.

Conventional wisdom has it that cycling holidays have to be done on the cheap, carrying lots of kit between campsites or spartan youth hostels. We eschewed that approach, deciding we would stay in two- and three-star hotels with good breakfasts to fortify us for the day's exertions and take the

absolute minimum of baggage, one cycle bag each, with the six-year-old carrying nothing.

At Hook, there was a choice of directions, either to head inland past Rotterdam towards the centre of the country, or to go up the coast, which is signposted as the Noordzee route. We chose the latter. The cycle path to The Hague takes you straightaway from the main road through the dunes and the market gardens where vast greenhouses, some heated by natural gas, produce the flowers and vegetables that contribute much to the country's prosperity.

Our holiday proved that cycling with relatively young children is feasible - and in any case Misha is a toughie with a lot of stamina. On the freestanding paths away from the roads, we let the kids go first, and then flexed our muscles a bit to catch them up. Again, it was just like skiing, except that the adults were faster than the kids rather than the other way round.

The first day, we made a bad mistake by having an ice-cream too many. As we licked our way through it watching the thunderous rollers on the deserted beach at Katwijk aan Zee, an ominous black cloud appeared over the sea. We had planned to stay three miles down the road at Noordwijk aan Zee, and jumped on our bikes hoping to beat the storm. We failed, getting drenched, despite our wet weather gear, in a storm of tropical proportions.

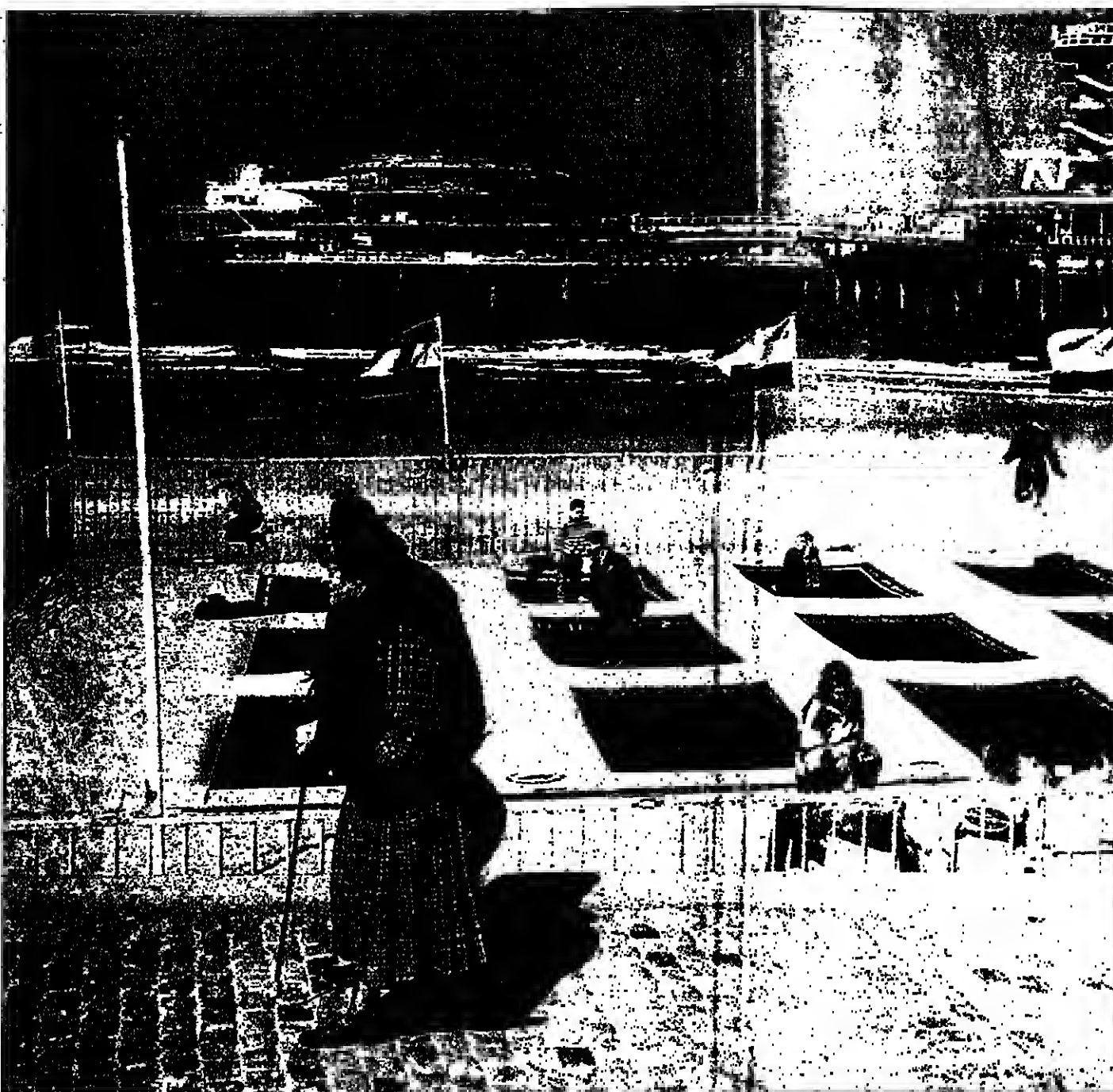
The next morning we discovered from my little cycle computer that we had done 38 miles, rather than the 15 or 20 we had expected that Misha could manage. Moreover, she was loving it and raring to go. The older kids, too, really began to enjoy the physical exercise of cycling and we spent the next couple

of days buzzing through the dunes - where the paths are quite hilly, but with the wind fortunately behind us - covering the whole of the coast up to Den Helder. It is a very attractive landscape and far more varied than we had expected, with some extensive forests. We made occasional forays inland, where the flat land is anything but boring as it is broken up by canals, lakes, fields of flowers and neat thatched cottages. The most exhilarating part was cycling along the huge concrete dikes, where for several miles there was space for us to cycle five abreast, beside the sea without fear of getting in anyone's way.

At Den Helder, we left our bags behind for a day's touring round Texel, the biggest of the islands of the northern coast, with an extensive network of cycle paths. It was a bit like a classy version of Southend, but somehow the fact that there are more people on bicycles than in cars adds to the feeling that this is a country which is just that bit more civilised than our own.

However, we had a few causes of complaint. First, while the cycle routes are, of course, wonderful by British standards, they have a tendency to give out in parts of towns. Secondly, the famous VVV's - the local tourist boards - are not as helpful as expected, being staffed mainly by sullen young women with something better to do than give you advice or book hotels in neighbouring towns. Thirdly, and surprisingly, it is extremely pricey to take your bike on a train.

These objections aside, Holland is a perfect place for a cycling holiday *en famille*. Flat it may be, but the country is anything but boring - and cycling is undoubtedly the best way to see it.



The sea front at Scheveningen

Photograph: Simon Shephard/Impact

## A guide to going Dutch

By Simon Calder

**Getting there**  
**Air:** The bad news is that World Airlines has just ended scheduled services on its sole route - London City to Amsterdam. The good news is that Amsterdam still has the best connections of any foreign destination. Flights serve the city's Schiphol airport from Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Guernsey, Humberside, Jersey, Leeds, Luton, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Southampton and Teeside. Most of these destinations are served by Air UK (0345 666777) or its partner, the Dutch airline KLM (0181-750 9000).

The lowest return fares tend to be available from airports in the London area. Air UK has a fare of £77 (including tax) for mid-week travel from City or Stansted. Agents may offer lower fares; for example, Major Travel (0171-485 7017) is selling Air UK flights from Stansted for £70 return.

Trains run four times an hour from Schiphol airport to Amsterdam's Central Station, taking 20 minutes and costing about £2 each way. There are also rail services to many other Dutch destinations.

Other Dutch airports with services from the UK are Eindhoven, Maastricht and Rotterdam.

**Rail:** One benefit of travelling by train to Holland is that most tickets enable you to travel to any Dutch station. Eurostar trains (0345 881881) as run from London Waterloo as far as Brussels, where you change for Amsterdam and beyond. The lowest fare is £77 (stay away a Saturday night, no changes permitted). The journey to Amsterdam takes about seven hours. Trains from London Liverpool Street connect at Harwich with Stena Line ships (0990 455455) to Hook van Holland, where trains depart for various Dutch destinations. An Apex return costs £49 to any station in the Netherlands; London to Amsterdam takes about 11 hours.



**Bus:** Cityprint (01304 240241) operates three buses a day from London Victoria to Amsterdam and other Dutch cities. An Apex ticket costs £27 return. Euroline (0990 143219) also has three daily services from London; the lowest fare is £29 return for midweek travel, £10 for other days.

**Ferry:** Stena Line (0990 707070) has two sailings daily between Harwich and Hook van Holland. The present pricing structure makes it much cheaper if you take a car than if you don't. Until 8 November, a car and four passengers can travel for £49 return. For comparison, the foot passenger fare is £36 for a five-day return. North Sea Ferries (01482 377177) has a ferry each night between Hull and Rotterdam. A car plus four people costs £265 return, while foot passengers pay £64.

Rail has an office in Hampshire (01962 773646), selling Day Rover tickets (£27 for unlimited travel), Euro Domino passes (three days in any month for £39) and Multi Rovers (five people travel anywhere all day for £61). To get you to your final destination, Train Taxi ticket costs £2.50 and entitles you to a ride anywhere within the city limits of 80 stations (but not Amsterdam, the Hague, Rotterdam or Utrecht). Alternatively, travellers with a valid train ticket can rent a bicycle for around £3.50 a day from many rail stations. Taking your own bike on a train costs up to £6, depending on distance.

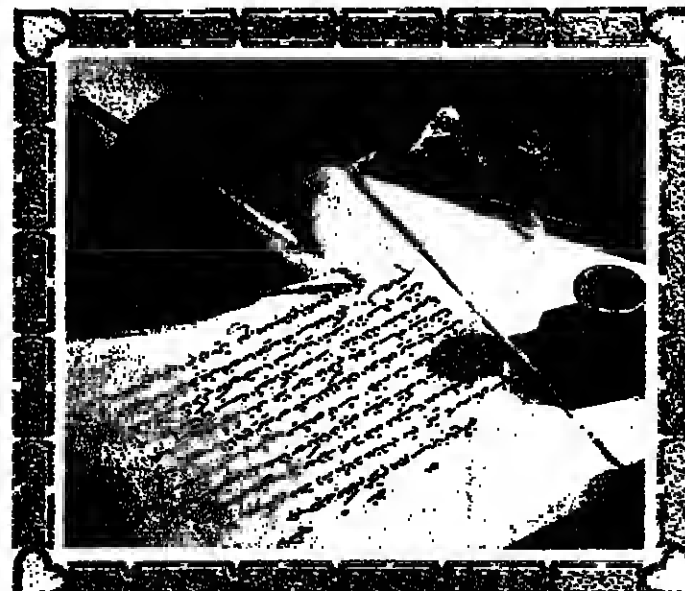
**City transport:** Amsterdam has trams, buses and a metro. Tickets can be bought for individual journeys, but it is much cheaper to buy a Nationale Stippenticket for around £5 which allows multiple journeys for you and friends up to a maximum of 15 miles (journeys within Amsterdam cost two or three units). You can use the same ticket on the Rotterdam trams, the Hague bus network or any other local public transport in Holland. Some tickets have a cross-word on the back to keep you occupied while waiting.

**Accommodation**  
 Advance hotel bookings can be made through the National Reservation Centre (00 31 70 317 5454); this is a special English-language line. No fee is charged. Bed & Breakfast Holland, based in Amsterdam (00 31 20 615 7527), can book B&Bs throughout the country if you book in advance. The Dutch youth hostels association, the NJHC, has 37 youth hostels, costing around £10 per night for bed and breakfast; call 00 31 20 551 3155.

**Further information**  
 The Netherlands Board of Tourism, 18 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LD (0891 200277) operates the shortest hours of any tourist office: it opens to the public 10.30am-12.30pm. The main tourist office in Amsterdam is opposite the main entrance to the Central Station, and opens 9am until late daily.

**Getting around**  
 The most sensible means of transport is the train - fast, frequent and heavily subsidised. Holland

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# I had a little bay tree ...

Workshop: How do you cope with a tearaway tree? Anna Pavord advises

I am hoping that you may be able to advise me on how to go about pruning a bay tree in my back garden. Our garden is a narrow town garden - just the width of our terrace house. The tree in question is right at the back. I planted it 18 years ago as a small cutting and it is now approximately eight metres tall. I like the bay tree. It is lovely and provides shelter for birds in winter and nesting places in summer. It acts as a wind-break so there's a nice, sheltered place to sit at its foot. But it grows bigger and bigger and blocks out the light for the adjoining garden. Last summer I got an estimate from a garden maintenance person to come and prune it in August, but he never turned up to do the job. This year I asked someone else. He said that it was a winter job and that all the branches should be cut right back, so I would end up with just a skeleton. I do not think that I want my winter garden to look miserable with a skeleton of a tree at the back. Can you tell me when the job should be done and how it should be carried out?

Hanne Westergaard's bay tree is, as she says, lovely. Nobody has ever told it that it's not supposed to be hardy enough to survive in Sheffield. It has grown at an extraordinary rate since she planted it, and has waltzed through Yorkshire winters without a hiccup. She estimates that it is about 25ft tall and it shows no signs of stopping there. I don't know of any taller ones in Yorkshire (and would be glad to hear of any) but at Kingston Lacey in Dorset there's a bay 48ft tall and even bigger ones flourish in Margam Park, near Port Talbot, West Glamorgan. Mild coastal areas suit it well.

But so, evidently, does Ms Westergaard's garden, which is a narrow, wedge-shaped plot on the inside curve of a crescent. The bay tree sits at the bottom of the garden, the thin end of the wedge, growing as a tall, dense spire, with branches right down to the ground.

Ms Westergaard has trimmed the sides of the bay fairly regularly, so the tree has become like a big piece of topiary. But now her ladder runs out away before the top of the tree and she worries about how she can manage it in the future. At least 8ft-10ft will have to come off to bring the top of the bay back within reach of Ms Westergaard's shears. I suggested that she put her ladder up against the tree and marked the height at which she would like to maintain the bay in future.

This rather drastic topping will spoil the beautiful, tapering cone shape of the tree. Perhaps the best way round this problem will be to rethink the shape, and clip it in future as a cylinder rather than a cone, cutting the sides up straight rather than on a sloping line.

Ms Westergaard was happy about this change of line. She had seen and admired bays clipped as cones and cylinders in the Botanic Garden at Copenhagen and could see such a shape fitting well into the space at the bottom of her own garden. She is Danish herself, but has lived with her English husband in this Sheffield house for the past 20 years.

The top will look bare and awkward for a while but, like yew trees, bays are tolerant of hard pruning. Leaves will grow again from the bare wood, but the recovery is quite slow. The best way to treat bay is to trim it lightly but regularly during summer, rather than to give it an occasional but very heavy pruning. If you trim the tree regularly, you encourage it to form the solid, tight mass of green foliage that makes it such a good lollipop tree in a tub.

Like Ms Westergaard, I wasn't mad about the idea of the whole tree being chopped back to a skeleton, as one contractor had suggested. Much too drastic. When yew hedges are given this treatment, only one side of the hedge is done at a time, with a break in between to allow the yew to get over the shock. But her contractor was not suggesting even this nicety. The tree might have recovered, but it would have been asking a lot of it. Especially if, as it was standing there naked and shivering, Sheffield suddenly turned nasty and dumped it into the middle of a long, hard winter.

So when should this painful beheading take place? Not before August and not after the end of October, I would say. If you were taking similar drastic action in reducing a deciduous tree, you would wait until after leaf fall before beginning work, and you would wait it done before the sap started to rise again in February. But evergreens, such as the bay, work to a different clock.

Ms Westergaard seemed worried about the competence of the people she had so far been in touch with about her bay. I suggested she should get contact the Arboricultural Association, which could recommend a qualified tree surgeon to her area. She cares about the garden very much. It was all concrete when she and her husband arrived, with cement washing up around the



Hanne Westergaard and her bay tree

Photograph: Gusefian

trunks of the three cherry trees that were the garden's only plants. Those came out. So, with more difficulty, did the concrete.

Ms Westergaard persuaded the corporation's road-sweepers to dump their loads of autumn leaves on her front garden. Then she carted the leaves through the house into the back garden to enrich the gravelly soil. She also got some old paving stones from the council and laid those to make an informal path down the centre of the garden, leaving plenty of

room for planting on either side.

There's a stone wall down one side of the garden and larch-lap fencing on the other. Both are swathed with climbing roses, pyracantha, clematis and an extraordinarily pretty little climbing tropaeolum, *T. tuberosum*, at its best now with spurred nasturtium flowers of orange, hooded in red. A 'Gloire de Dijon' climbing rose had taken itself up into the stratosphere, tangling with pyracantha around the back door of the house. What you looked at on the fence was not

roses, but gnarled, thorny stem. "While you're here..." said Ms Westergaard. In the next half hour we hatched a drastic rejuvenation plan for the rose, as well as a hatchet job on the pyracantha. Meanwhile, a frog watched us with beady pond eyes from his berth in the little pond on the left of the garden path. He's not going to like these changes at all.

The Arboricultural Association is at Ampfield House, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 9PA (01794 368717).



## cuttings

Jonathan Garratt of the Hare Lane Pottery has gathered together a clutch of fellow craftsmen for a collaborative show, to 27 October. Sarah Walton is showing chunky bird baths, Petra Reynolds has lemony tableware and Svend Bayer has smooth, sculptural garden planters. The pottery is just outside Cranborne, near Wimborne, Dorset (01725 517700).

Apple Day has its anniversary on Monday. Since the first celebration in London's Covent Garden in 1990, more than 400 groups have organised events, including the National Trust in its gardens at Acom Bank and Attingham Park. The Acom Bank garden (Sunday 2pm-5pm) will offer apple tastings, help identify visitors' apples, and hold pruning demonstrations. The garden is at Temple Sowerby, near Penrith, Cumbria (017683 61893). Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire (01743 709203) offers a guided tour of the orchard and pleasure grounds today and tomorrow, 2.30pm, a display of unusual apples and a quiz. At Crapes Fruit Farm, Aldham, near Colchester, Essex (01206 212375), Andrew and Ann Tann are displaying some of their hundreds of apple varieties. Gift packs can be sent as presents. The parishes around Much Marcle in Hereford and Worcester celebrate the apple this weekend and next. Jackie Denman has arranged orchard walks, apple and cider tastings, and more. Call 01531 670544 for details.

## weekend work

Continue to pick tomatoes, which had a slow start this season. 'Dario' (Marshall's, £1.77) has been very successful. Its large fruit, about four to a pound, make fabulous soup. Sow lawn seed in areas that have been well dug, raked and cleared of stones and debris. The warm, moist soil will encourage seed to germinate and grow before frost strikes.

Cut back dying stems of herbaceous perennials and compost them, but leave perennials until March, so as to avoid frost damage to young growth.

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## toolshed

Tom Barber advises on leaf clearance

It seems a little intemperate to curse trees because their leaves fall off. The inconvenience, however, can be real enough, and poetic musings on nature's rich cyclical pageant are scant comfort when faced with all those rotting autumn corpses. A smothering of fallen leaves can kill grass and other low-growing plants and will congeal on paths and driveways to form a soggy, slippery mess. They gleefully block gutters and drains and can also provide a winter refuge for the fungal spores of existing diseases such as scab and blackspot.

Leaves landing in ponds slowly putrefy into a stinky black gunk which can pollute the water. If you have ponds that are liable to leaf invasion, cover the water with oerling during autumn, or fish the leaves out while they are still afloat.

If your deceased leaves do not carry any of these threats, they repress any tendency you have for tidiness and let them alone. Leaf clearing is tedious at the best of times. Besides, in a suitable place such as a shrubby border, an annual dressing of leaves is positively beneficial, forming a natural mulch and returning valuable nutrients to the soil. But if a leaf cull is required, you have three choices: the rake, the wheeled leaf-sweeper and the blower-vac.

The good news is that not only is a rake the cheapest and simplest tool, but also, in most situations, it is as fast as anything else and often the most effective. Spring-tined and stone rakes are pretty hope-

less, as they quickly become clogged with impaled leaves. Do yourself the favour of getting one that has been designed for the job, with broader or softer heads, such as the rubber-toothed Wizard from Bulldog or the plastic leaf rake from Spear and Jackson. A traditionalist may opt for a heather besom, which, if handled with energetic dexterity, does an excellent job.

Picking up the assembled piles of leaves is swiftest using a simple pair of wooden boards, but if repeated bending and lifting is a problem get yourself a long-handled leaf-grabber. For moving the piles to wherever you want them, I find a large, tough sheet the best bet, though you need to be able to lift the thing, and you may find a capacious wheelbarrow is easier to manage.

Lawn-sweepers operate just like a carpet-sweeper, with wheels turning a series of brushes that propel the debris into a rear-mounted bag. They work best on areas such as good turf and hard surfaces (not gravel) but are less satisfactory if the ground is uneven. There is not much to choose between the various models on the market, though wider machines will obviously complete the task in a shorter time.

Powered leaf-collectors are a relatively recent commodity. They employ either a vacuum to suck the leaves up into a bag, or a blower that carries them into more easily raked up heaps. Many have both, and some also incorporate a shredder which

chops the leaves up as they are drawn in, reducing both their volume and their composting time.

The cheapest electric leaf-collectors can now be had for less than £100. But, as with most garden machinery, the best performance almost always comes from larger, heavier and more expensive models.

Call me a Luddite, but on the whole these machines seem to be more trouble than they are worth, being no quicker than a vigorously wielded rake and certainly no more thorough, especially when you are faced with wet leaves, twigs and fruit. I suggest you try one out before you buy.

A cheaper alternative on grass is to use a mower on its highest setting, with a grass box fitted. This will pick up most of a leafy carpet, and shred it into the bargain. Never discard the leaves that you have laboured to collect, as they produce the most marvellous of all organic materials. They take time to decompose so are best dealt with in their own pile rather than the compost heap. You will have to wait between one year and two before you've got usable leaf mould, though mixing in some grass clippings the following spring will speed things up.

A simple wire cage is quite adequate. Firmly tread down each addition of leaves and add a little water if they are dry. For smaller quantities you could just use plastic sacks. It's worth it in the end. Honest.

مكتبة من الامم





Photograph: Newstream International

## Five go mad in Shropshire

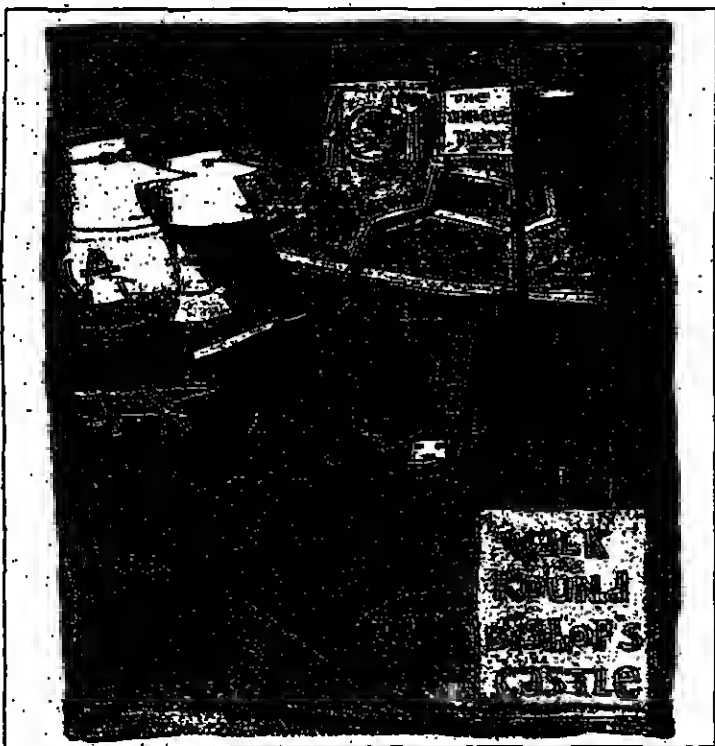
Daniel Butler and friends found historic Bishop's Castle rich in scenery and pubs

**T**he historic road from Ludlow past Stokesay was controlled, probably from the 8th century, by the bishops of Hereford who built a castle where the gap narrows between the mountain lines of the Long Mynd and the Clun Forest. Only a small garrison was needed to keep a check on the Welsh and to regulate the town which had sprung up on this 'road of the castles'.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica's* entry for Bishop's Castle is hardly exhaustive, but the brief reference to the critical role of geography was enough to send five of us off to investigate the area's walking possibilities. Although it now has a marvellous feeling of tranquillity, for several centuries this small Shropshire market town lay at the heart of some of the most fought over terrain in Britain.

There are several excellent pubs, but we chose to start and finish our walk in The Three Tuns, a former coaching inn, with its own brewery, dating back to the 17th century. Its helpful manager, Keith Kightley, sorted out a selection of suitable walks, providing a hot meal on our return. With a couple of two-year-olds in tow, we picked a short walk south of the town, to Cwmawr Dingle - a path through ancient woodland.

Fortified with XXXX bitter we set off down the High Street, ignoring the threat of rain. We headed boldly for the Norman church at the bottom of the hill before we were turned left along Church Lane. This path soon



forks and we took the right branch, turning left almost immediately to wander up a track that forms part of the Shropshire Way.

At the end, we found ourselves in the front garden of The Fields, a whitewashed cottage. We were faced with a choice: either carry on in a straight line for a longer walk or turn right across open fields. The weight of the toddlers on our shoulders was beginning to tell and the pub's gas-

tronic delights were starting to call. So we opted for the shorter walk, stopping first at some sloe-laden blackthorn hedges. As we harvested a tiny fraction of the bumper crop, we looked over superb views of the Long Mynd - the 16-mile ridge that runs parallel to the border. In the past it was a place of mystery, with the rocky promontories of the Stiperstones surrounded in superstition. Today, it is a Mecca

for hang- and paragliders. Although spectacular in any weather, the view was much improved by the sudden emergence of the sun, dappling everything in a warm light with the contours of the hills highlighted by the scudding shadows of clouds. The improved weather brought out the wildlife, too, and in no time four pairs of buzzards were wheeling overhead in the stiff breeze.

In spite of the billy surroundings, our own walk was comparatively gentle. The toddlers were able to run alongside, chasing the dog and diving into hedges for the last of the blackberries. We continued over the ridge, crossing a rickety stile to be confronted by views north and west into Wales. Then we crossed another open field, aiming for a stile, beautifully framed in a wall of overgrown hedge and strongly reminiscent of a castle doorway. After crossing the next, much smaller, field and yet another stile, we were in the bottom corner of the wood - where the children were delighted to spot the white-and-red tops of fly agaric, those classic 'toadstools' beloved by illustrators and garden gnome manufacturers.

By now, however, there was just one thing on our minds - how quickly could we get to our wild mushrooms on a bed of black mushroom rice and the casserole of chicken and duck? Just as important, which of the pub brewery's four beers would we pick to go with it? So the toddlers were swept on to shoulders and we completed the final half mile into town at a jog.

The meal was everything we had hoped and all five of us were soon too full to consider the afternoon stroll which the scenery deserved, but we compensated for this by watching a peregrine circling high above the town. Then we set off on a guided tour of the brewery.

Maps: OS Landranger 137; Pathfinder 930. The Three Tuns (01588-638797) also provides maps.

**Duff Hart-Davis** Time to harvest 'the silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun', as Yeats would have it



may admit a uniform draught".

Pliny also recommended that apples should be gathered "after the autumn equinox, and not before the 16th day of the moon nor later than the 28th, nor on a rainy day, nor till an hour after sunrise".

I cannot claim that these quotations spring from regular readings of Pliny. Rather, they come from *Ripe Apples*, an engaging little anthology of poetry and prose collected by the Gloucestershire antiquarian Roy Palmer and published to celebrate Apple Day, on Monday, 21 October.

Living as he does in strong cider country, Mr Palmer includes many pieces about that heady brew, not least a ditty about Cider Annie, who was well known around Ledbury in the Fifties:

*Old Cider Annie she has gone  
To orchards in the sky  
No longer need she trudge  
The road  
For life has passed her by...  
No more lying in the ditch  
And no more in the barn;  
She's resting in an orchard  
Now  
And nothing can her harm.*

An early report from Worcestershire has workers drinking 16 pints of cider a day, but "a lot if we can get it". A 19th-century document records how, on the eve of the Epiphany, Devon farmers would go out into the orchards at night with their families and labourers and, "amidst loud cheers and discharges of firearms", pour libations of cider at the foot of the trees to ensure next season's harvest.

"Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples", runs the Song of Solomon; and this anthology contains much good cheer. Yet not a jolly, Thomas Cogan, writing in 1584, warned that new apples, eaten before they are fully ripe, "hurt the sinewes" and "breede wind in the second digestion".

Four centuries on, a bitter taste derives from a government statistic which shows that the area of orchards in the United Kingdom fell by more than 50 per cent between 1970 and 1994; and a poem by Edward Garfitt, published in 1987, echoes the same sad story:

*Five apple trees  
Are all the stranger sees  
In what the village calls  
The Orchard Field.  
Others, as they pass,  
See only trees and grass  
Where to our village eyes  
A ravished orchard lies.*

*'Ripe Apples' is published by The Big Apple Association, Woodcroft, Putney, London. Herefordshire HRS 2RD, price £5.95.*

## A spice worth its weight in gold

Saffron is fun to grow at home, and tastes delicious, writes Patricia Cleveland-Peck

**S**affron, the spice obtained from *Crocus sativus*, was once a flourishing industry in England. In 1597 Gerard wrote in his *Herbal* "Saffron groweth plentifully in Cambridgeshire, Saffron Walden and other places thereabouts as come in the fields".

Today, Caroline Riden is one of the few people in the UK producing the home-grown plant in bulk. As an autumn crocus, the crop will soon be ready for harvest. Then Ms Riden begins the laborious task of hand-picking the three scarlet stigmas from each mauve flower, drying the small, aromatic strands and preparing them for sale - usually to Fortnum & Mason. It takes hours of work, and the stigmas from 150 flowers, to produce one gram of saffron.

Ms Riden lives in North Wales where she and her husband John also raise a suckler herd of Aberdeen Angus. She began growing saffron 10 years ago with 15 corms bought at a garden centre. She planted them in a pot in the greenhouse and was



*Crocus sativus*: 150 flowers produce one gram of saffron

delighted when they flowered the following October. The dried stigmas produced only enough saffron to flavour a dish of rice, but she had established the principle - growing saffron was possible.

"It need not be difficult," she says. "You begin by preparing the soil in a sunny spot. Dig in manure and, as the crocuses prefer a slightly alkaline soil, add a little lime if necessary. Plant the corms

between June and August about 12cm (5in) deep and a similar distance apart."

Ms Riden's original experience proves that the plant will also flower in pots. Flowering itself is triggered by a fall in temperature and usually continues for a month or so, but do not expect too much the first year. As each corm matures it produces 'baby' corms, a process known as 'dorming'; after four years the

plant should be dug up and the small corms removed and planted separately.

Saffron needs to be gathered daily, preferably in the morning. In a garden situation it is better to nip out the three brilliant red stigmas and leave the crocus flower in situ. When you've collected your stigmas, dry them, avoiding both damp and light. Ms Riden advises first taking off the white base, or style, but this is a matter of taste - leaving it on produces a different 'note' in the flavour. The saffron should be wrapped in absorbent kitchen paper and dried in an airing cupboard for two or three days until brittle. It will last up to five years in an airtight container.

British saffron has a sweetness not found in the imported spice. In the home-grown product, the underlying slightly bitter tang is tempered with a honey scent. This adds a distinctive quality to dishes such as bouillabaisse, paella, saffron cake, saffron bread - even potatoes.

Ms Riden recommends using saffron in the form of saffron milk or saffron water. 20 or so strands are toasted for a few seconds in a saucepan and then a tablespoonful of boiling water is added. Allow to cool and then add this concentrate to 150 ml of water or cold milk. This can be stored in the fridge (strain strands out if left for more than 2 days) and will give a golden hue and a delicious flavour to any dishes which require milk or water - it is especially good in pastry for fruit tarts.

For details of saffron cultivation and order forms for corms send SAE to Caroline Riden, Cae Eryn Farm, Rhyddin Hill, Caerwile, Chwyd LL1 9EF.

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## Tax-free but not without worries

PEP mortgages are making a comeback. Clifford German weighs up the risks involved

**T**en million people have a mortgage, several million now have tax-free personal equity plans, and the combination of the two in the form of a PEP mortgage has been around for years. But it is still a modest slice of the total mortgage market in spite of the obvious attractions of paying off the loan with the proceeds of a totally tax-free investment instead of a conventional endowment policy.

One reason for the slow take-up of PEP mortgages is probably the strong trend away from products, which repay the mortgage in full only at the very end of the term, in favour of the traditional repayment mortgage, which starts reducing the size of the loan with the first payment.

This in turn can be traced back to the alarming revelation that, because of the drop in inflation and in the returns on investments, some "low-cost" endowment policies, mostly those taken out since the mid-Eighties, might not actually grow fast enough to pay off the mortgage at the end of the term, let alone provide the fat surplus that most projections banded around in the early Eighties.

In fact these fears may have been exaggerated. Only a handful of maturing endowment mortgages so far have failed to cover the debt, and most insurance companies are still suggesting that policies maturing in the next few years will cover perhaps 1.1 or even 1.2 times the loans they are linked to. But the fall in property values over the last five years and the phenomenon of negative equity also tilted the balance back in favour of repayment mortgages, where slowly but surely negative equity is reduced as the debt shrinks.

PEP mortgages may have suffered along with endowment mortgages, especially as the value of the PEP can actually fall visibly if the underlying investments are doing badly. PEP mortgages are also seen as relatively inflexible, with no scope to extend the payment term, and lacking the automatic life insurance cover which endowment mortgages provide.

The wheel of fortune may now be turning back as the property market recovers and negative equity begins to diminish. The appeal of PEP mortgages has increased visibly because the strong showing of the stock market has put real profits into the pockets of PEP investors.

Next week Standard Life is hoping to capitalise on the trend by launching a mortgage package called Homebuilder PEP combining a PEP invested in Standard's own managed unit trust and fed by regular premiums, with a special mortgage protection policy to protect the payments against a sudden loss of earnings. There is also a critical illness option.

Other eventualities are covered by the option to increase and extend the mortgage, make early repayments, and take payment holidays. The plans can be used to finance a property purchase or a remortgage of an existing property. The minimum mortgage term is five years, the maximum 35. The minimum starting age is 19 and the maximum 75, although critical illness cover is only available to under-60s.

Borrowers are expected to pick their own lender, which could include fixed-rate or discount loans. The PEP is invested in a relatively expensive unit trust with an initial charge of 5.5 per cent, an annual management charge of 1 per cent and a bid-to-offer spread of 6 per cent (including the initial charge).

But Standard Life expects to sell as many as 10,000 PEP mortgages next year compared with around 50,000 of its existing Homeplan unitised endowment mortgages. Anyone interested can apply to a Standard Life branch, call freephone 0800-333333, or go to an independent financial adviser.

## The sweet way to sell

In the first of a four-part series, Rosalind Russell shows how to display a house at its best



**T**he house was immaculate. Bowls of fragrant pot-pourri stood in the hall, the paintwork was bright enough to warrant Ray-Bans and the master bedroom looked show home perfect. Upstairs in the drawing room of the honey-coloured barn conversion, the Turkish rugs, antiques and plumped-up sofas could have featured in a magazine spread. But something niggled. Having prepared a textbook house sales pitch, why did the vendors have the kitchen radio blaring so loudly that we could barely hear ourselves speak? The answer lay in the garden. As soon as we stepped outside, the roar of the M1 half a mile away – impossible to disguise, even with Radio 4 at full volume – shattered the peace of the Hertfordshire countryside. The owners were clearly distraught when another potential buyer said thanks, but no thanks.

To overcome a highlighted location, there's little you can do except lower the price to an irresistible level. Fortunately, other flaws are cheaper to fix, and most can be dealt with for less than £250.

Toys should be tucked into cupboards, beds made, clothes picked up off the floor, kitchen and bathroom kept spotless and old newspapers thrown out. It does not add charm to have an unrestored classic car rusting quietly in the garage alongside a cobwebby barbecue and old

paint tins. The detritus of other people's lives is deeply unattractive. If it's not moving with you, throw it out; if it is, pack it in a case and stick it in the attic.

"Carpets should be cleaned," says Judith Wilson, a stylist with *Homes and Gardens*. "Very important. It can make the difference between someone thinking 'Good, I'll negotiate those carpets in with the price' and 'Oh God, we'll have to replace those grubby carpets. It'll cost a fortune.'"

Stylists should know. The reality of famous homes as featured in the glossies often bears little resemblance to the finished photo session. Stylists bring in vanloads of flowers, cushions, sofa throws, lamps, dainty china – even scones and jam. Seemingly fragile stars have shown a surprising determination to hang on to these extras once the shoot is over. Sadly, this service is not offered to the house-selling public, surely an unexploited gap in the market.

"Flowers are terribly important," agrees Judith. "And you'll notice show homes often have magazines such as *Homes & Gardens* in the sitting room to give the impression that you're buying that sort of lifestyle with the house."

New cushion covers – plain, not patterned – pull together the colours in a room, as will Habitat's new plain, off-the-peg tab-headed curtains, says Judith. She applied her advice to her own

home and swept all the clutter off the mantelpiece, replacing it with a single vase of flowers.

"It looked brilliant," she recalls. "Put a bowl of fresh apples on the dining table. And if you have a poky bathroom, remove the blind and you'll find the room looks lighter."

Taking the "Beware of the dog" sign from the front gate is also advisable.

Sellers used to be urged to grill a few coffee beans, or stick a loaf of bread in the oven, and hope that viewers wouldn't notice the mushroomy smell of dry rot.

Hoary old chestnuts both. The latest gimmick is a foodie room spray. Made by the Devon-based firm Heathcote and Ivory, Country Kitchen room sprays have been launched in the Carpenters and Superdrug chainstores at £1.99 a pop. They come in four flavours: freshly ground coffee, lemon meringue pie, apple pie with cinnamon, and pink grapefruit. In scent-sensitive Japan, demand has been enormous.

I have to report that the coffee spray smelled more like Tia Maria than Kenco, but the dog licked his lips for half-an-hour after the testing.

"The idea came from male customers who said they didn't like the traditional peach or rose scents," says the sales director, Paul Lane. "We toyed with the idea of a bread spray, but in all the tests it comes out smelling like burned toast."

No such frivolities for David Bedford, an East Anglian estate agent. He thinks a quick, successful sale is all down to the survey. More crucially, a pre-sale structural survey commissioned by the owner. It is made available to all potential buyers, then assigned to – with the cost reimbursed by – the eventual purchaser.

"We advise clients selling a property more than 50 years old to have this done," he says. "It can reassure buyers, or at least show them where future problems and expense may lie."

Of Mr Bedford's clients, 30 per cent take the same view. And the firm claims far fewer sales fall through when this survey exists. It also tends to discourage buyers using a survey as a last-minute bit of arm-twisting to knock down the price. "In our experience, buyers try to knock off £20,000 for work that might cost £3,000."

Sellers have the option of acting on the survey and having repairs done themselves. The legal position is that although the seller commissions the survey, it is done in trust for the as yet unknown purchaser.

"Everybody talks about the Scottish system of property sales being better," says Mr Bedford. "But there you can waste a fortune on several surveys and still not get the house. Their system [where once the offer is accepted you are legally bound to purchase, combined with this pre-sale survey, is the dream ticket.]"

## Treat your gutter with respect

Autumn is the time to check up on drainpipes, writes Josie Barnard

**B**urglars love them, but most house-holders ignore them until they get blocked by falling leaves. Autumn is the time to consider your drainpipes. According to Dyno-Rod research, 50 per cent of the population don't bother, while just 12 per cent do an annual clear-out.

Treve Rossoman, architectural curator at English Heritage, says drainpipes should be treated with respect. "Any broken guttering will quickly cause tremendous problems in your brickwork. And if you've got a house where the main gutter runs through the roof to the back, you probably won't know about a blockage until your roof collapses."

A Dyno-Rod survey last May found that property surveyors would like to see more potential house-buyers checking their drainpipes prior to purchase.

Meanwhile, Treve Rossoman is appalled at the way builders have played fast and loose with plastic drainpipes since the war. "Frontages have been ruined by houses being converted into flats. If bathrooms are at the front, they smash a hole through that wall... it's cheaper than taking the waste round to the side. It's an abomination."

By contrast, Modernist architects have gone to some lengths to hide drainpipes, thereby contravening their honesty-is-the-best-policy rule.

Michael Johnson, an architect, is bemused. "Since the Beaubourg Centre in Paris, much architecture has been about expressing a building's functions. Yet the Beaubourg codes all its external services pipework in bright primary colours, except the drainpipes."

In their first historical incarnation, drainpipes were dominating features. The medieval equivalents were lead-lined wood gutters plus magnificently carved gargoyles that spouted rainwater through stone monster mouths, safely away from church walls.

It was the Georgians who started the drainpipe hokey cokey. In and out of sight, ordering them, with the 1724 Building Act, round the back of houses lest they ruin the clean look of facades. But even the Victorians, for all their table-leg-covering modesty, did not try to hide drainpipes completely.

Now we have become coy. "Look at Stansted Airport," says Michael Johnson. "There is no visible evidence of how the

rainwater gets from the roof to the ground."

For some people, though, drainpipes are a point of pride. The Charles Brooking Collection at the University of Greenwich has more than 100 rainwater heads dating from between 1800 and 1960, including examples used by builders to date their work.

For a huge variety of modern drainpipes, head for the Building Centre at London's Covent Garden. "As far as I know," says the information manager, Darren Jarvis, "this is the only place in Britain where you can come and look at an extensive collection of contemporary drainpipes. Even high-class builders' merchants tend to stock only two or three plastic makes."

As well as handing out catalogues for copper, flower-blue and ruby-red drainpipes, the Building Centre offers advice. They can tell you about Guardian Security Pipes, "flush to wall and immovable" to flummox burglars, or, if you are more concerned with aesthetics, put you in touch with suppliers such as J & JW Longbottom of Yorkshire, who stock cast-iron drainpipes.

But cast iron doesn't come cheap. A job lot of four downpipes, 20 metres of half

round guttering and four rainwater beads will cost around £150 in plastic. Double that figure for basic cast-iron equivalents, and treble it if you want plenty of fancy bits such as turret-style hopper heads and fleur-de-lis eartbands. Treve Rossoman decided his bank balance couldn't stand such an outlay.

"My house is 1904, but someone put square plastic drainpipes on. I painted them dark green, which is, along with dark red and blue, a traditional colour for 19th-century guttering and downpipes."

Of course, the best way to appreciate the variety of drainpipes is simply to look around. My personal favourites are those at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, where gargoyles overlook pedestrians. But as part of a Neo-Gothic building, the gargoyles are toothless, literally. Their mouths are closed; rainwater gushes down black drainpipe tails.

Charles Brooking Collection, University of Greenwich Dargford Campus (0181-316 9897). Call for appointment, a week ahead to see specific examples. The Building Centre, 26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT.



مكتبة من الأصل



# The renovation game

By Penny Jackson



Melanie Walsh and her family outside Dancers Hill: the house has been painstakingly restored over the last four years

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Melanie Walsh has a passion for old, interesting buildings, so it came as no surprise to her three sons when the family upped and left their comfortable home to rattle around in a leaking Georgian mansion. Even so, after the first two days of rough living in their derelict stately home in Hertfordshire, the Walsh boys demanded they retreat to a hotel.

"We bullied the children into believing it was going to be a fabulous adventure, but after a week-end of washing over a standpipe and using a bucket to flush the loo, they weren't convinced," says Mrs Walsh. "It was pretty awful," she admits.

Indeed, four years ago, Dancers Hill House, with its 18 acres of gardens and fields, was short on all home comforts. Most of the running water came through the roof. "All the lead had been stolen and the rain had soaked all the timbers. The plaster was loose and if you didn't walk round with a hard hat you'd be knocked unconscious. The first thing we had to do was to make the house watertight."

So had the house, in fact, that Melanie and her husband Nigel chose not to tell the rest of their family of their plans to move there and restore it.

"Never in my lifetime", were the words of an aunt, when she finally clapped eyes on the project. She was wrong. Within a couple of years the splendour of the Grade II-listed house had become apparent. Rooms were unboarded to display the proportions of their 18th-century origins, period features were saved and painstakingly copied where they had decayed beyond repair. At the same time, the history of the house was gradually uncovered as the Walshes burrowed into cellars and stables.

As Melanie drives us through Hadley Green, Barnet, on a mini-guided tour her love affair with houses, as distinct from property, is obvious: "The one that looks like a church was Spike Milligan's house; this is the oldest cottage in the village; I'd love to buy that house - gorgeous, isn't it?"

It is not a new interest. "I got the bug when I was 11. My parents wanted to move and I was fascinated by all the house details that kept arriving. Ever since then I have spent most of my spare time looking at houses. My husband is just the same. That's why we are selling our house now: we need the challenge of something new. I suppose some people would think we were mad."

Melanie Walsh has an infectious enthusiasm. At Dancers Hill she points out the curious arched passage way at the back of the drawing room that had been an open loggia until incorporated into the building, and that the back of the house is higher from the ground than the front, to stop servants watching the comings and goings in the drive. We look at a vast bedroom with a study, that had once been five dark and poky rooms. In the library, home to the family's myriad collections of anything from Dinky cars to unopened Batman packs, she points to a fireplace - "We had to go to Huddersfield for that" - and an ornate ceiling rose. "The excitement when we knew we could save it". Yet, in the restored conservatory, imitation flowers replace the real thing. "They all died during a hot spell when we were away", explains Melanie.

She was unwilling to say how much all this restoration work cost, but Nick Staton, the agent handling her property, said that today a house like Dancers Hill, bought in a very run-down condition, would go for about £750,000.

In the basement, work is under way to make the enormous original kitchen habitable, with its stone

flagstones and ancient range: "It's really so that Nigel can cook - he's marvellous at it - and chatter to people at the same time."

The house is, despite long hours with conservation officers and builders, first and foremost a family home. "We cherish its history, but it's not a museum piece," says Melanie Walsh, firmly.

For most of the time it is overrun with friends of her sons, who find themselves in a child's paradise. Where the formal garden ends, the fields and wooded wilderness begin, and a football pitch has even been carved out of a clearing. There are stables, used for the filming of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a 300-year-old cottage, and the remains of a 19th-century swimming-pool, now home to a family of moorhens.

"It once took me two hours to find my sons during a game of hide-and-seek. We have strict rules now."

So won't the family miss all this space? Melanie is unrepentant. "They understand that we need a new challenge. It will be very exciting. In fact, I've been looking at this old asylum ..."

Dancers Hill House is on the market for £1,350,000, with Statons, Hadley Green (0181-449 3383).

## house hunter



Narborough House in Norfolk is a gem of a Georgian country house, in need of extensive restoration but possessing many original features. It has a reception hall with a magnificent staircase, four reception rooms, a conservatory, a study and cloakroom. The kitchen is basic. There are 10 bedrooms, but the top floor lacks electricity and water. The owner, in her nineties, has not been into some rooms for 30 years. The listed house overlooks parkland on the edge of the village of Narborough, 10 miles from King's Lynn. The once formal and part-walled gardens are neglected. Offers in the region of £175,000. Agents: Beltons (01553 770053).



In Marlborough, Wiltshire, there is a chance to extend and modernise a Grade II-listed brick-and-flint house in the centre of town. The inside of the neo-Gothic building, thought to be a Victorian folly, is virtually a shell. A rendered brick extension was added early this century. There is planning consent to extend to the back of the house alongside the main wall. The house has no heating and a lean-to kitchen and bathroom. The asking price is in excess of £100,000. Agents: Hamptons (01672 516256).



A barn in the heart of Swaledale, used for the filming of *All Creatures Great and Small*, is being sold with permission for conversion into a home. The traditional stone barn, near Marske-in-Swaledale, will make a two-storey house with three good-sized reception rooms and five bedrooms. It stands in a field of nearly three acres, close to Skelton Farm, and it has its own access from a small country lane. It is six miles west of Richmond, just outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The guide price is £110,000. Agents are Jackson-Stops & Staff (01325 489948).

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Frankie's  
seven  
wins cost  
me £1m  
over Fred  
the biggest  
stake

Brans  
German

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# Frankie's seven wins cost me £1m

Bookmaker Fred Done's biggest financial mistake



Bad news for bookies: Frankie Dettori

**M**ost bookmakers lost money when Frankie Dettori won all seven races at Ascot one day last month. But two decisions of mine made our own losses even worse.

Dore Brothers runs 93 betting shops throughout the North-west, and we have the reputation of giving the biggest bonuses on multiple bets like Yankees and Canadians. At 7.30am on Saturday, September 28, my bet control manager and I were discussing bonuses for the day.

At first, we decided we were going to give a 50 per cent bonus on all Yankees in our early-morning price races, and 100 per cent on all Canadians.

I was just going out, and then I changed my mind. I said: "Don't do it on the early-price races, do it on all the races at Ascot. And double the bonuses, because I think we'll have a big day today."

We'll give a 100 per cent bonus on Yankees and a 200 per cent bonus on Canadians. That week, I'd already made another decision. We were due to open a new shop on the coming Monday, but I rushed it forward to Saturday.

That afternoon, I was home watching racing on television. The bet control manager rang me up before the third race to say we'd taken several big bets on Dettori's horse Mark of Esteem - and they added up to £10,000.

He said: "Dettori's already won the first two races and, if he wins this, it'll be no good for us." So I knew we'd got some problems, but nothing very serious.

Then the bet control manager rang again just before the fourth race, and said the phones were ringing off the book. We had £6,000 riding on Dettori in that one, and it was a 12-1 chance. Then I knew

we'd got problems. The bet control manager called me back into the office, something he hasn't had to do for 20 years. Then, of course, Dettori's fifth horse won. We were up to our armpits in it by then.

Frankie won the sixth race, and we just sat there. There was nothing we could do. We'd shortened the odds as much as we could. We couldn't even lay off the money with other bookmakers, because we'd laid 10-1 on some of these horses in the morning, and now they were going off at 2-1, just because of the sheer weight of money. We would have had to put £200,000 or £300,000 to get our money back.

Word was getting round the shops that Dettori had won the first six. The shops were doing triple business, and the punters were still betting on Frankie. The atmosphere in

the shops was just electric and of course Frankie gave us no chance. He won the seventh as well.

By 6 o'clock, we knew we were in for £500,000. By 6.30, it had crept up to £750,000. The problem was you just didn't know what the final liability was going to be - it could have been £2m or £3m. It was frightening. At 7.30, we finally found that we'd just topped the £1m. The biggest payout we did was to a guy who'd invested £12 with us, and walked away with £200,000. Another one bet 50p and won £57,000.

On the Monday morning, I came in to work and wrote a full chequebook out. The smallest cheque was for £15,000, and they went up to £25,000.

By 5 o'clock on the Monday night, everyone had been paid out, and we'd blown £1m. The bonuses alone cost us

£500,000. Just to rub things in, the shop I'd rushed to get open on Saturday morning had lost £50,000 - another brilliant piece of timing on my part.

Nobody's going to give a bookmaker any sympathy - I know that, but we got it in the neck. It was like being a minus lottery winner. The small punters lived it, and they rubbed it in a bit.

But you can't blame them for that - it's all part of the game. You stick your neck out in business and, sometimes, you get it chopped off.

The Sporting Life has done a video of Dettori riding those seven winners, and I've just sent off for 20 copies to give to the punters who had a lucky day. I can't watch it myself - it's a horror movie to me.

Fred Done of Done Brothers (Manchester) was talking to Paul Slade.

# Branson's blueprint

Clifford German examines Virgin's new pension contender

**V**irgin Direct launches its long-awaited personal pension plan this weekend, although the timing, almost 10 years to the day after the great crash of 1987, seems to be entirely coincidental. The emphasis is on simplicity and flexibility. Virgin will not accept transfers from existing pension plans or from the state earnings-related pension scheme.

But with Richard Branson's high profile image behind it, the product seems certain to establish itself as a basic plank of pension planning for anyone who does not already have a long-term pension plan. It could also serve as a blueprint for the simplified pension products the Labour party is pledged to promote.

Contrary to some forecasts, Virgin will offer free, optional advice on the pension, based on a full financial fact-find, which could take roughly 40-45 minutes over the phone. Anyone who takes out a Virgin personal pension will receive a six-monthly report on the progress of the investments and an annual financial review, but no one will be bombarded with brochures offering other financial products and Virgin will not sell its customer lists for other salesmen to use.

Investors can put a minimum of £50 into the pension plan, and pay a flat charge of £2 per payment. Regular savers can put in £50 a month increasing by 10 per cent each year but if they prefer to stick with the same level of contribution that is possible. They can put in regular contributions or lump sums at any time, and they can start, stop or restart contributions at any time without any penalties.

No-one pretends that £50 is enough even over 30 years to buy a full pension, but it is better than nothing and anything is best started early to take full advantage of compound growth.

Investors can put into a personal pension any amount up to the maximum percentage of earned income specified by the Inland Revenue, starting at 17.5 per cent under 35 and rising to 40 per cent for over-60s. Tax relief means that a standard rate taxpayer gets a £24 tax contribution for £76 actually invested, and top rate taxpayers get £40 for every £60 invested.

The money will be invested in Virgin's own existing UK tracker fund, which is managed by Norwich



Planning for peace of mind: Money is switched out of shares into government stocks as retirement age nears. Photograph: Tom Pilon

Union, with no front-end charges, no bid-to-offer spreads, and subject only to the 1 per cent per annum management charge which applies to the tracker fund itself. However, there is a 2.5 per cent penalty for withdrawing in the first three years.

According to Virgin's own brochure, assuming the standard growth in the investments which all pension fund providers use in their projections, over 15 years the charges will take no more than 9 per cent of the funds invested for existing customers. New customers will expect to pay about 10 per cent in charges, which compares with the charges of Equitable Life, the cheapest conven-

tional pension fund provider, and is significantly less than the broad industry average of around 15 per cent. Put another way, buyers of a Virgin Direct pension plan who put in £250 a month for 15 years can expect a pot worth £84,000 after charges have been deducted, compared with an industry average of around £79,000 assuming that in all cases the actual investments grow by 9 per cent a year compound.

The Virgin pension funds invested will rise or fall in line with the shares in the FTSE 100 share index, which will make monitoring the performance of the funds a piece of cake compared with the with-profits pension funds offered by conventional

insurance companies, where the cash is invested in assets which are never precisely identified and the funds are smoothed to even out the inevitable fluctuations in the value of shares, fixed-interest stocks and property.

Virgin pension funds may well fluctuate more sharply, not least because the FTSE 100 share index itself is liable to fall in the short run, as the 30 per cent slump 10 years ago graphically illustrates. But over a working lifetime, or even over 5-10 year periods in the past 50 years, the underlying trend should be up, and it should outperform conventional risk-free savings plans by a substantial margin over time.

As an additional safeguard Virgin, unless specifically requested not to, will automatically switch an individual's pension fund out of the FTSE tracker fund into fixed-interest stocks over the final 10 years before the date he or she expects to retire.

This is to guard against the possibility that the fund will be at a relatively low ebb on the precise date the policyholder retires.

Virgin will not be providing the actual pension annuities, so there will be no inbuilt penalties for changing providers to get the best eventual pension the accumulated funds can buy, as frequently happens at present.

# Illness cover costs down

Clifford German on PHI changes

**A**nyone who has a permanent health insurance policy (to provide an income to policyholders who are too ill to work) which was taken out before last April should check they are not being charged too much premium.

With effect from April, all benefits on individual policies are being paid free of tax until the policyholder returns to work, so the amount of cover now required for a given level of benefit is less than it was when the proceeds were taxable, and many policyholders still paying the old rate may well be paying too much for cover they do not need.

According to Midland Bank, up to a million people with PHI cover may be paying an average of £25 a year too much for cover which, under the new rules, would also exceed the ceiling which PHI providers want to pay.

Most providers would originally cover a maximum of 70-75 per cent of gross income prior to the claim, less any state benefits which may be payable, so that policyholders do actually have an incentive to go back to work if they can.

Now the benefits are tax-free the entitlement could well exceed these thresholds and some long-standing policyholders could be better off not working. But the majority who want to work might think they are now paying too much.

Midland is not planning to renegotiate existing policies, but it is reducing the cover it offers on new policies to keep the actual benefits payable net to roughly the old gross levels. It is scaling down the premiums accordingly.

It is also writing to its established PHI policyholders suggesting they could reduce the level of cover they pay for from 75 per cent to 50 per cent of current gross income, and offering to refund the excess premiums paid since April.

Reducing the premiums will save the average policyholder about £5 a month or £1,800 over the lifetime of a 30-year policy. Nick Lomas, the spokesman for UNUM, based in Dorking and one of the big providers of PHI insurance, says it has reduced its cover for new policies from 75 per cent of gross income to a flat 50 per cent of gross salary, and has contacted independent financial advisers through whom most of its policies are sold, suggesting they review the level of clients' cover at their next assessment.

But UNUM believes that many policyholders have substantially less than the recommended level of cover and should allow their benefits to rise rather than reduce their premiums.

Norwich Union, which now sets a ceiling on cover of 60 per cent of income but disregards any state benefit when calculating the payouts, has also asked financial advisers, who are responsible for selling 85-90 per cent of its policies, to draw the attention of policyholders to the fact they could be over-insuring.

But providers are unanimous in saying that only around 10 per cent of working people in the UK have PHI cover, and this is far too few in the light of the reduced levels of state benefit now available to people who cannot work because of illness or injury.



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In part two of our investigation into life assurance, Peter Rodgers and Nic Cicutti look at mortgages

## Trusts

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## 25-year mortgage repayment plans – unit-linked

Company	Projection ratings
Equitable Life	A+A+A+
Scottish Widows	A+AA
Standard Life	A+A+B
Midland Life	AAA
Woolwich Life	BAA
TSB Life	AAC
Scottish Mutual	AAC
Abbey National Life	BBA
Scottish Amicable	BBA
Legal & General	BBA
Clerical Medical	BBA
Sun Life	BBA
Eagle Star	BBB
NatWest Life	BBB
Norwich Union	BBB
Friends Provident	BBB
Gan Life and Pensions	BBB
Britannia Life	BBB
Skandia Life	CBA
Guardian Financial	BBB
Hambro Assured	BBC
Scottish Provident	BBC
Scottish Equitable	BBC
Canada Life	BBC
AXA Equity and Law	CBB
Scottish Life	CCB
MGM Assurance	CCB
Royal Insurance	CCC
Allied Dunbar	C-C-C
Old Mutual	C-C-C

## Something to hide

Insurers have ways of concealing the true costs of policies

The rules introduced last year to ensure that prospective policyholders are given details of charges they will have to pay are a tremendous improvement on what went on before.

But there is still considerable scope for simplifying the information and closing loopholes that allow some companies to hide the true costs of their policies.

One simple way in which companies do this is simply by not taking part in surveys aimed at comparing different charges. When *Money Marketing* published its recent survey on unit-linked investments, about 20 companies declined to supply the information requested of them.

Among them were AIG Life, Barclays Life, Century Life, Cordell, Hill Samuel, Irish Life, London & Manchester, Mercury Asset Management and National & Provincial Life (now taken over by Abbey National).

Others were Refuge, Royal Liverpool, Sun Life of Canada

and Teachers' Assurance, which has become entangled in disputes with many teachers who were wrongly advised to opt out of their occupational pensions and start private ones.

Some companies, like Barclays Life, said they did not have the resources to meet the survey's tight deadline. In some cases this rings true: Barclays has taken part in previous surveys. Others claim they did not sell the policies concerned any longer. This is also true, but policyholders might still want to know how their savings are performing.

There is, in any case, plenty of scope for massaging the figures, as with-profit policies, show. The supposed attraction of such policies lies in the fact that they "smooth" returns, so that bad performance years are offset by good. However, this makes it near-impossible to tell whether the estimated charges over the lifetime of a policy will be as stated.

This is because between 28 to 65 per cent of a maturity payout is the so-called "termi-

nal bonus". The actual amount has been falling in real terms since the early 1990s.

Unit-linked policies also impose charges that can double the total initial charge from 5 or 6 per cent up to 12 per cent each year. This can be done in a variety of ways including "capital units", which amount to permanently heavier charges made on the first years' contributions.

Other novel cost structures include Scottish Equitable's "specific member charge", whereby extra fees are levied if contributions are halted or reduced during a policy's lifetime. Yet because of unemployment, divorce and the offer of alternative company pension schemes, 8 per cent of Scottish Equitable policyholders stop their payments every year. Hundreds more reduce their contributions.

Scottish Equitable also charges more if a person increases premiums, despite companies constantly urging their policyholders to do so to ensure a decent retirement pot.

Skandia Life operates a similar "contribution servicing charge" based on the principle of penalising policyholders who miss their payments.

Abbey Life, owned by Lloyds Bank, charges policyholders an extra 6 per cent if they stop premiums in the first year, reducing to 1 per cent by year six. By this point, as the actuarial firm AKG points out, most pension holders have stopped their contributions, usually for perfectly genuine reasons.

Sun Life gives policyholders an "extra fund injection" but only between eight and five years before retirement. This boost improves the value of the fund at retirement. It also allows Sun Life to project far lower annual management charges over the entire life of a contract. But given that only 13 per cent of all policies are still kept going after 20 years, the full Sun Life loyalty bonus is paid to one in seven policyholders. Everyone else pays extra.

A similar policy is adopted by Albany Life, owned by US insurer Metropolitan Life.

## The early surrender value game

10-year savings plan – with-profits

Top companies	Surrender value end of year 1
NFU Mutual	1,200
Equitable Life	1,170
Standard Life	1,118
Scottish Widows	1,093
Commercial Union	949

### Bottom companies

Royal Insurance	0
Tunbridge Wells	0
RNPFN	115
Sun Life of Canada	171
Medical Sickness	180

### Average

589

10-year maximum investment plan – unit-linked

Top companies	Surrender value end of year 1
Equitable Life	1,178
Standard Life	1,118
Scottish Widows	1,093
RNPFN	996
Medical Sickness	874

### Bottom companies

Abbey Life	0
Allied Dunbar	0
Hambros Assured	259
Scottish Equitable	298
Sun Life	363

### Average

639

Based on investment of £100 a month, starting age 30. Investment funds assumed to grow at 7.5% a year.

Do companies really want their policyholders to keep their contributions going until their policies mature? Most insurers probably do prefer to see payments kept up for the whole period.

But are some maximising their returns in the early stages by combining high charges with heavy surrender penalties in the first few years?

For these companies, there could be a positive advantage if few customers stay on to maturity and a large number lapse. Any insurance company with both low early surrender values and a high lapse rate is clearly taking much of its profit at an early stage.

The summary tables (above) for two types of 10-

year savings plan show the best and worst surrender values.

Unfortunately, companies are sensitive about publishing lapse rates and these are not yet generally available. But Mr Chapman says if there is a high lapse rate and a low early surrender value, it is a cause for concern about the company.

Mr Chapman points out that those considering investing with such companies face the double risk of the early loss of their money and of being sold an inappropriate policy.

In Singapore, companies with high lapse rates have not been allowed to recruit more sales staff until their lapse rates improve. Maybe such shock treatment could be adopted in the UK.

## How the rating system works

The basis of John Chapman's rating system is the fact that charges rather than investment performance are the primary determinant of policyholder returns when buying a pension, mortgage or savings policy from a life insurance company.

Investment results are important, of course. However, the arithmetic of charges puts it into perspective. The charges reduce the overall yield of a policy by the equivalent of between 1 and 5 percentage points a year. For those cashed in early, the reduction in yield can be 10 per cent a year or more.

A simple analysis of a company's final performance – the cash delivered when a policy matures – is not the best way of measuring how good it is,

As few as 30 per cent of investors may hold a policy to maturity, and it is vital to know what they will be paid should they pull out early.

Mr Chapman's rating system takes this into account, by rating companies on how much they pay back investors, or give in pension transfer value, in the early stages of a policy, part way through it and at maturity.

First, the system rates a company's past performance, based on the amount paid at the three stages. The same calculations are done again, based on the company's own projections of future payouts.

Since charges are the dominant factor, the projections have the same investment performance. Variations in the

results are therefore a short cut to showing the differences in charges at each stage. These sums are in the first three columns of the main mortgage table (facing page).

But Mr Chapman does not rely on a confusing array of numbers. Instead, he allocates a letter from A+, the best, down to C-, the worst. A company with an A+A+A+ rating is excellent at every stage. A rating of CAA or CCA means a policyholder will be treated badly on early surrender but well if the policy is kept to maturity. The letters are allocated by calculating how far a company deviates up or down from the midpoint of all the companies in the category.

The top handful of companies in the main and summary tables are those where good

future projections are matched by past performance. In the rest of each table, the rankings are based on companies' projections of future charges alone.

John Chapman's pioneering methods for comparing performance between companies have been adopted by *Money Marketing*, the magazine for independent financial intermediaries, which asked KPMG to carry out detailed calculations for each company. Mr Chapman's analysis for *The Independent* uses these calculations.

Fuller performance tables for unit-linked and with-profits policies are available from *Money Marketing Customer Services*, St Giles House, 50 Poland Street, London W1V 4AX, for £3.75 each inc p&p.

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# The index-linked puzzle

## Why do investors ignore a guaranteed real return of 3.5 per cent?

Why don't more people buy index-linked gilts? The question has long been a puzzle. Now it seems more pertinent than ever. All the latest economic indicators suggest that inflationary expectations are starting to rise again.



Jonathan Davis

The Bank of England is already pressing openly for higher interest rates, and the money markets are setting the price of gilts and interest rate futures at levels which imply that higher rates are on the cards for next year. Unemployment is falling faster than expected, fuelling expectations that the economy is approaching the point where it cannot grow much further without inflation rising.

On top of that we have all the risks of a pre-election period, with consumer spending booming, tax cuts in the offing, and unaffordable rises in public spending again a real possibility. Only the strength of sterling, this month's favourite currency, is currently acting to dampen inflationary expectations.

Put all this together and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the risks of higher inflation are indeed rising.

This ought to be an environment in which index-linked gilts prosper.

And so, to a degree, they have been. The real yield on long term index-linked gilts has this year fallen below 3.5 per cent, down from its peak of 4.5 per cent five years ago.

For the last three years the big investment institutions have gradually been increasing their holdings of index-linked gilts. As a result, prices of index-linked gilts are now trading close to their year's highs.

Yet most of this revival has passed the individual investor by. Most individuals, by and large, do not buy index-

linked gilts, preferring to put their money either into building societies, equities or into insurance products of various kinds.

Conventional gilts are traditionally not very popular with ordinary investors either, and it may be that index-linked are simply too complicated to catch on. Certainly, most people seem blissfully unaware that they exist, let alone how they work.

Why should this be so? Cynics may say it is because, unlike unit trusts, nobody has a vested interest in selling or advertising them. A simpler reason may be that investors are simply not accustomed to think in terms of real - rather than nominal - returns.

It is much easier to think in terms of actual cash returns rather than on the purchasing power which that cash represents. A 3.5 per cent "real" return does not sound either very meaningful or very impressive. Yet it is the equivalent of 6.5 per cent in money terms (adding the current inflation rate of 3.0 per cent).

The great attraction of an index-linked gilt is that, if you

hold it until its maturity date, both the income you receive and the capital you have invested are guaranteed to be fully protected against inflation.

No other investment offers such an effective guarantee of both income and principal. As the guarantee comes from the Government, the money is even more secure than it would be in a bank or building society. The guaranteed return - 3.5 per cent in real terms - is at least double what you currently get on a building society deposit account.

Add to that the other advantages of buying any kind of gilt - you can buy them direct or at a post office for the tiniest of commissions, with no brokers or advisers to pay - and their neglect seems bizarre.

A 3.5 per cent real return may not sound like much, but given how risk-averse many investors are, it is by no means unattractive. Not for nothing are index-linked gilts dubbed "the ultimate defensive investment".

As Stephen Lofthouse points out in an excellent new book about personal investing, it may be that

investors have been misled by the high returns which have been available on shares in the 1980s into projecting them forward indefinitely. It is true that returns from index-linked gilts have lagged well behind both shares and conventional gilts in the last 10 years.

The annual total return from an index-linked gilt in the ten years to 1995, for example, was 7.9 per cent, against 14.2 per cent for conventional gilts and 18.6 per cent for equities.

But this is only part of the story. Investment is about risk as well as reward. It so happens that the last 10 years have been characterised by conditions - falling interest rates and inflation, rising corporate profitability - which have been uniquely favourable to shares, broadly kind to conventional gilts and least suited to index-linked gilts.

Yet the one certainty is that either shares or conventional gilts can sustain the kind of high real returns recently achieved forever. It is a historical aberration which must one day come to an end.

the long-term real return on equities is 7-8 per cent. But that is before taking account of charges and costs.

If you hold all your shares through a unit trust or investment trust, the effective real return after taking account of costs and management charges may fall to something nearer 4.0-5.0 per cent per annum.

For that you have to take on all the risks of the equity market. For any long term investor, starting out today, the 3.5 per cent real return on index-linked gilts looks very attractive by comparison, given that it comes entirely risk-free and at a time when inflationary risks appear to be reviving.

Of course, nobody should put all their money into index-linked. They will never produce fireworks. But the case for making them part of any sensible investment portfolio looks stronger today than for a long time.

And if inflation does revive, and real yields decline further, you will have the chance to make capital gains as well.

*"How to Fix Your Finances"* John Wiley & Sons.

## loose change

Proshare, the non profit-making organisation to promote wider share ownership has negotiated a series of deals which will allow new members to trade shares at discount commission rates through Fidelity, NatWest Stockbrokers and Birmingham-based ShareLink.

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Fidelity will offer new Proshare members up to £35 off the commission on the first trade if they open a Stockbroking Service or Stockbroking Plus account, or off the cost of the first trade after opening a Fidelity ActiveTrader Account (which offers special low rates to investors

who trade at least 25 times a year in UK securities), plus a 50 per cent discount on the first year's service fee.

NatWest Stockbrokers offers a 10 per cent discount on dealing charges through its BrokerLine telephone dealing service plus a 20 per cent discount on the annual fee for its advice service, access to its research news sheets and discounts on the bank's will and executive services.

ShareLink is offering a £50 cashback for ProShare members who open a self-select PEP or transfer an existing PEP to a new Premier PEP. There is also a 30 per cent discount on Premier's new issue bulletin.

The AITC and ShareLink are launching a new low-cost execution-only share dealing service, called Share-IT, for investors wanting to buy or sell investment trust shares. There is no

charge to set up the account, the dealing charge is 1 per cent up to £2,500 with a £10 minimum, falling to 0.75 per cent between £2,500 and £5,000 and a maximum of £45 on deals up to £75,000. Details on 0121-200-4591.

If another US fashion crosses the Atlantic stand by for a specialised UK unit trust targeted at gays and investing only in gay-friendly companies. The Meyers, Sheppard Pridmore Fund will not invest in companies unless they have a progressive policy towards gays and lesbians, says Shelly Meyers, the fund's portfolio manager. She has identified 400 US companies that meet its requirements, such as operating policies of non-discrimination and offering benefits to partners of gay employees. Among them are American Express and Time Warner.

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# I want to be a Power Ranger



Text & photos by Mary Dunkin

Ben's mum may not approve of his chosen fancy dress outfit, but 99,999 other parents in the last couple of years have forked out £29.99 so that their offspring can prance around as a Power Ranger. According to Clive Jones, marketing director of Dekker toys, the largest manufacturer of children's dressing up clothes in Europe, these days children want character outfits. Since 1990, when the film *Batman* was released, the demand for cowboys and Indians and Robin Hood's has dwindled - they've even discontinued the clown. The boys want to be Batman, Spiderman and Superman and the girls want to be Esmerelda, from Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Fifteen years ago children might have had one cowboy outfit - now it's not uncommon for

them to have several character outfits.

Meanwhile, in a little shop in Kensington mummies are still buying cowboys and nurses and fairy outfits by the hundred. Janey Hillborough and Hannah Doherty started by selling traditional toys and games by mail order. Last year they added dressing up outfits to their list and opened a shop, "The Hill Toy Company".

They don't do specific characters - their outfits are more generic. Hannah feels the film *Pocahontas* had an influence on the sale of wigwams and Indian brave outfits, while 101 Dalmatians probably contributed to the popularity of Dalmatian outfits. "Last year we were fantastically successful our traditional fairy" says Hannah. "And we did brilliantly well with the Dalmatians."

Max wears a guardsman's outfit, £32.95, from The Hill Toy Co. "I don't go to dressing-up parties. When I get home from school I change into jeans and a T-shirt and a denim shirt. When I go to bed I wear swimming trunks and a non-sleeved T-shirt. I don't watch *Power Rangers* any more. I liked *Batman Forever*, but I wouldn't like to dress up as Batman."

Ben wears a Power Ranger playsuit, £29.99 from Hamleys. "My mummy thinks Power Rangers are violent. I think they're quite amusing and Daddy thinks they're violent and Hannah [aka Garden Fairy] thinks they're excellent. I used to watch them on television, but when I came upstairs after watching them I wrecked the bedroom when I was fighting with my sister and my mum said 'if you don't stop fighting, I'm not letting you watch *Power Rangers*'. So we went on and on fighting and that was the end of us watching *Power Rangers*. But I'm out said - I like watching *Paddington Bear*. It's my birthday tomorrow. I can't wait to be six - I can beat-up my friend, George."

Hannah's Fairy outfit came from Cheeky Monkeys: dress, £24.99, and shoes £16.99. The wand £1.25, is from Non Stop Party Shop. "I like to dress up as ballerinas, queens, princesses and rabbits. I don't have any dressing-up clothes at home - I only have toys and books. I especially like the crown."

## Where to get it

The Hill Toy Company: well made traditional dressing up outfits - guards, fairies, nurses and animals. 71 Abingdon Road, London W8 (0171-937 8797). Ring 01765 689955 for catalogue.

Cheeky Monkeys: has a good range of animal costumes, fairy outfits, and accessories. 202 Kensington Park Road, Looe W11, (0171-792 9022); and 24 Abbeville Road, London SW4, (0181-673 5215)

The Disney Store: Soow White, Cinderella, Pocahontas, Captain Hook et al. The Disney Store, 140-4 Regent St. London W1 (0171-287 6558). Call 01923 220022 for local branches.

Fiona's Esmerelda costume, £24.99, Hamleys.

Katie's Nurse's uniform, £15.99, and bag, £21.95 are both from The Hill Toy Co. "I pretend to be a nurse at home and my sister pretends to be a doctor. My friend lies on my bed and I test her reflexes. I think when you get older you get kind of bored of the babyish things like fairy costumes and princesses. I was 5 or 6 when I wore them - now my four-year-old sister wears them."

Adam's Pirate costume, £17.99. The hat, £5.99, and hook £1.25 are from Non Stop

Letterbox: transform your child into a giraffe, elephant or lion. Call 01572 580 885 for a catalogue

Dekker Toys: mostly character outfits for 3-year-olds to 6 plus. Toys R Us, Argos. Call 01727-844421 for nearest stockist.

Non-Stop Party Shop: great for accessories, especially for Halloween. 216 Kensington High Street, London (0171-937 7200)

Hamleys has a strong selection of children's fancy dress outfits such as Esmerelda (see left). 88-96 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 3161).

Charlie Crow Costumes specialise in furry animal outfits for babies to 12-year-olds. Call 01782-417133 for local stockists.

Party Shop. "My favourite thing to dress as is a cowboy, but I hardly ever dress up when I'm at home because my brother doesn't want to. I used to go to fancy dress parties, but not any more. They're for four- or five-year-olds - and I'm six. The last one I went to I dressed up as a clown. It's fun dressing up as a pirate because they're quite a lot more naughty than clowns."

Zavina and her twin sister wear Dalmatian suits, £22.95 from The Hill Toy Co. "I like the Dalmatian costume but it's a bit scratchy. I want to wear it at parties and at school."

## From a grandfather's gift to high tech wizardry

Brigid McConville looks at the latest crop of pre-school products at Nursery World

The second Nursery World Exhibition opened its doors at London's Earls Court Olympia yesterday and proved that although money can't buy you love, when it comes to small children, it can buy a great deal of care and entertainment, not to mention safety. As today's overworked parents struggle to find "quality time" for their children, their spending on educational games, toys, books and other materials for the very young has gone through the roof. And the pre-school market has been quick to respond.

Although this is only the second time that the pre-school industry has turned out in force, the show is twice as big as last year's - which attracted 11,000 visitors - and next year, two exhibitions are planned.

Although this exhibition is aimed at childcare professionals, it offers parents plenty to look at

or buy. The big names like Berol and Lego are all there, but it's the original ideas from individual newcomers that make the exhibition worth a visit.

Rebecca Sandy was a teacher until this summer when the pictures and stories she invented for her infant class became so popular that she gave up her job to launch her own company, Ten Town Teaching.

The stories of the Ten Town characters help children to remember how to write their numbers without reversing them. There is Tommy Z, servant to King 1, whose shape "kneels" to tie the king's shoelaces, while Fiona 5 does five knee bends as she goes for a jog - and so on.

Rebecca invested £15,000 of her savings in the first print-run of Ten Town products, which include a frieze, flash cards, worksheets and

parents' book. Half have been sold since July - mostly by word of mouth - which means that Rebecca has already got her money back. "It was a huge leap of faith," she says, "but it's paid off."

The genesis of Twoey Toys was also one of homemade creations turned by popular demand into a family business. It was a doting grandfather's handcrafted gift to his granddaughter - first a shop, then a blackboard - which grew into an attractive range of flat-packed play furniture, now sought after by nurseries and playgroups as well as parents.

Such ideas are obviously useful, and will certainly appeal to traditionalists. At the other end of the spectrum the show is a launch pad for a mind boggling range of computer programmes aimed at pre-school children. Two of Britain's biggest computer software

companies, Apple UK and Acorn, have joined forces to create the company Xemplar which is setting up a "software village" at the Nursery World Exhibition.

SEMERC (Special Education Micro Electronics Resource Centre) offers a range of more than 400 products for primary and special needs children. "Children with learning difficulties who may not be able to hold a pen can hit a switch," points out Margaret Thompson from SEMERC. "Texts can be made larger for visually impaired children, or they can hear what is being typed. Spell checkers and word prediction (where the screen suggests options) can also help children to learn."

Talking Stories software from Sherston - amongst others - aims to bring the Oxford Reading Tree stories to life with animation and sound. Publishers Dorling Kindersley have a

broader range of CD ROMs on display too: in *PB Bear's Birthday Party*, based on the bestselling book, the words are highlighted as the story is read, encouraging children to make the link between the spoken and written word.

But what's wrong with a human helper making this link, you may well ask? "Computers are no substitute for sitting on mum's knee," agrees Alan Bennett of Xemplar, "but Information Technology for pre-school children can help with their phonic skills and early counting". And of course, if your child starts using keyboards at aged three or four, the software companies are likely to have a customer for life.

Ten Town Teaching 01785 211284  
Twoey Toys 016974 78420  
SEMERC 0161 6274469



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Plus: Peter Courad's prickly encounter with Peter Greenaway

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IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



bazaar

## good thing

Shopping list fridge magnets, £7.99

Make running out of milk and forgetting to buy the cat's food a thing of the past. Write your shopping list on the fridge. This magnetic kit comes with all manner of shopping suggestions and a few blank cards for delicacies undreamt of by the it's creators. The General Trading Co, call 0171-730 0411

## checkout news: shop with mother

Wilkinson discount chain is currently offering its customers the latest in supermarket fun for all the family - toddler-sized shopping trolleys. The discount retailer hopes that if children join their mothers strolling round the store with their own mini trolleys, they'll be less likely to get bored and scream that they want to go home. Of course cynics might argue that it's simply a way to ensure that parents are tantrumed into buying a child's shopping selection. Not so, according to Gordon Brown, managing director of Wilkinson, who claims the trolleys are part of a new concept of trading - the aim being to bring the whole family into stores. "Giving children their own trolleys is part of that process."

Wilkinson has already enriched the "whole family" shopping experience through the introduction of the kids trol-

leys at the bigger stores in its 220-plus chain. According to Mr Brown the response has been positive. But then Mr Brown has not met Joyce Knight a septuagenarian, of Harlow, Essex. Mrs Knight's encounter with the trolleys at her local branch involved ten-year-olds racing in the aisles and a child bearing down on her at full pelt aiming for her bad leg

"Children were dashing around the store with the trolleys. The assistant said they'd had no end of complaints but that head office were set on keeping them," she says.

English tourists may have seen child-sized shopping trolleys in some French supermarkets. The French children trot obediently alongside *Maman*, apparently untampered by adult legs. However, the more *laissez-faire* style of parenting favoured by Britons may result in a new variant of trol-

## mad thing

The Little Voodoo Kit £8.99

This malicious little outfit comes replete with book, doll and pins but the emphasis is less on the black arts than on new age "revenge therapy for the over-stressed". The temptation is to stab furiously at the intimate body parts of your hate object, but with this kit you can refine your skills to subtle and specific probes. Tips for cases of extreme tension include naming a bag of jelly babies after that special person and putting them through a mincer. Professional help's probably best at that point. Published by Bantam at £8.99



ley rage if the idea catches on here.

But at the moment that seems unlikely. Tesco and Asda both tried out kids-trolleys in a handful of stores and rapidly withdrew them after customer complaints. The Tesco shoppers were alarmed by checkout tantrums when the children realised they were not going to be allowed to keep the goodies they'd selected. An Asda spokesman said parents didn't like the trolleys because children tended to wander off making it harder to keep an eye on them.

Over at Wilkinson, Mr Brown remains a mini trolley supporter. "No one has brought any adverse reactions to the trolleys to my attention. Children certainly love them and there have been no accidents involving them. We want to make shopping at Wilkinson a life-time experience."

Jenny Knight



## Bridge Alan Hiron

E-W game: dealer North

North	South
♠ 10 8	♠ 7 6 3 2
♥ 3	♥ A Q 7 5 2
♦ 7 6 3 2	♦ A Q 7 5 2
♣ 4	♣ 9 6 5 2
♠ 9 6 5	♠ 4 2
♥ 10 9 5	♥ A K J
♦ 9 6 3	♦ K 8 4
♣ 10	♣ A K 7 3
	♠ A K Q 10 8 7
	♥ 8 4
	♦ 10

One of the curiosities of this game is that the most natural-looking play in the world can be completely wrong. This deal illustrates the point well. I am quite sure that nine players out of 10 would go astray. North passed, East (playing five-card

major) opened One Spade and South, giving up hope of better things, overcalled with Four Hearts. This sounded pre-emptive to West and, with little excuse, he doubled to end the auction and led ♠ 4.

Declarer played the jack from dummy – would you not do the same? – and East intelligently played low. South could hardly play another spade at this point for fear of ruffs and he continued with three top trumps and exited with a fourth.

West won and made the right switch to a club. After that, there was no way for declarer to escape a spade loser and careful defence by East led to a (very fortunate) one trick defeat.

You have all the clues. How should South have played? The ♠ 4 from dummy at trick one is the right card! This is covered by the nine but when in dummy later, after clearing the trumps, declarer can run the ♠ J. Whether this is covered or not, he now loses no spade tricks and duly lands his contract.

## News quiz of the week

1. Who did Toby Graham and Lourdes Maria Ciccone Leon both come face to face with this week?

2. Who waltzed into a court but may have some time to wait before learning whether she will walk out again with half a million pounds?

3. Which dyslexic died this week after giving us all *So Much Love*?

4. "Able red Len axed" – well, his name wasn't Len, actually, but if you rearrange the letters you should find out who we're talking about.

5. Which former dissident, now an Israeli Cabinet minister (pictured right) said: "When he's up against 25 Israeli Jews, he knew it would be tough"? Who was the person he was referring to, and what had the speaker just done to justify his statement?

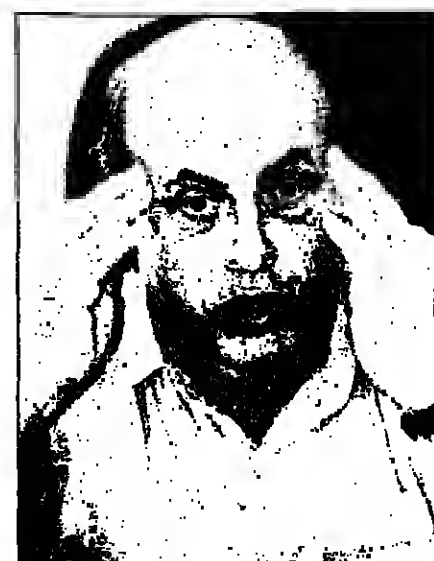
6. A champion who this week was stripped of his title and banned for a year for using an illegal substance, is considering taking legal action against the judge, who happened to be his brother. The illegal substance was cardboard. What was the sport?

7. Where did those feet, in ancient times, walk, and why is the evidence no longer apparent?

8. Which two sporting giants settled a contest for a £100,001 prize, then started negotiations for a rematch?

9. A watercolour painting by a famous hand fetched £2,500 at an auction in Brigg, two-and-a-half times its estimate. Who painted it?

10. What do a taxi driver, a vet, a diplomat, a tube driver and oow a vicar have in common?



## You may have missed ...

... what a week it's been for inventions:

In Britain, we have seen the development of the artificial sweaty foot, invented by a leather company in Northamptonshire to assist shoe design. According to a report, an average pair of feet will produce in a day's trekking enough sweat to fill a soft drinks can.

In Japan, however, they have developed a laptop computer that can withstand being dropped from a height of 70cm (28 inches) or having coffee spilled on it.

Other inventions this year: From Hungary: the musical condom that plays a tune when unrolled.

From Malaysia, the "Bala Clamp", a disposable circumcision device said to resemble a corkscrew and available in different sizes to fit various ages.

From Austria, the "liquid condom", which the user paints on to provide skin-tight protection.

From Switzerland, a battery-powered suitcase on which a traveller may ride.

From Denmark, the "oil", a unit of smell for assessing environmental health and the need for ventilating the workplace.

Quiz of the week answers  
1. Their mothers, Clare Short and Madonna  
2. Mary Walsby, singing Berings for her bonus  
3. Beryl Reid (title of her autobiography)  
4. Alexander Lebed 5. Anatoly Sharansky beat Gary Kasparov in a chess simultaneous display  
6. Conkers 7. Dinosaur footprints were stolen from a sacred Aboriginal site in Australia  
8. Lieke Martens of Terry Venables and Alan Sugar  
9. Adolf Hitler 10. All winners of Mastermind

## Competition puzzles

Numeracy

Alphanumeric teasers:

If "26 L of the A" is "26 Letters of the Alphabet", can you work out what the missing words are in the following?

10 C R of a T  
3 S D A in an E T  
32 D F at W W F

Literacy

By now you should be getting the hang of this numbers and letters game, so here is a further selection with a distinctly more literary bent than the previous set.

6 C in S of an A  
3 M of A D  
2 G of V

Perplexity

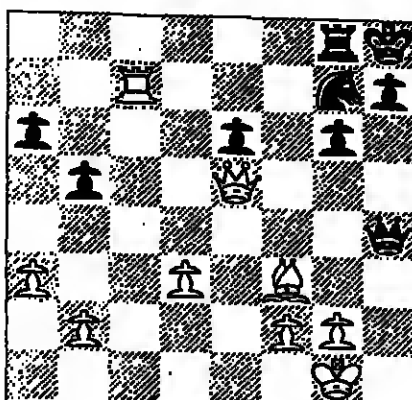
As if you hadn't had enough, here are some more – perhaps more perplexing than before. Can you fill in the incomplete words in the following numerical puzzles?

12 W in the P S  
7 L in I L W  
1 Q M at I E

A prize of the new *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* will be awarded to the first correct set of answers, opened on 31 October. Entries for Saturday Pastimes, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

3 October Perplexity answers: No other number has the property required. Winner: GJ Bradley, for an elegant proof of the fact.

## Chess William Hartston



In the last round of the Monarch Assurance Open on the Isle of Man, the top seed, Vladimir Tkachiev, needed to win against Andrew Ledger to overtake his opponent and take first prize. He achieved it in a controlled attacking style culminating in a neat finish.

In the diagram position, after Black's 31st move, White had tied his opponent down but still needed to find a way to deliver the fatal blow. An obvious and strong plan is to go after the Q-side pawns with Bb7 or Ra7, but Tkachiev found a far more incisive way to finish the game.

Stage one – drive the rook from g8: accomplished with 32.d4 Qb6 33.d5 exd5 34.Bxd5 Rf8.

Stage two – cut out any nonsense with Qc1+: achieved with 35.g3 (giving the king a secure hiding place on g2).

Stage three – exploit Black's back-rank problems: 35...g5 36.Rf7! Rf8 37.Qb8+! forces mate) 37.Qc7! Rf8 38.Qxf7 38.Rf8 mate) 38.Qe7! Rf8 39.Rxf8 resigns. Here are the full moves of the game, a good illustration of how a top grandmaster can keep enough tension and strategic complexity in a position to play for a win without risk:

White: Vladimir Tkachiev

Black: Andrew Ledger

1 e4 c6 21 Qf4 f6  
2 Nc3 d5 22 exf6 Nxf6  
3 Nf3 Bg4 23 Qe5 cxd3  
4 h3 Bx3 24 cxd3 Nxe4  
5 Qx3 Nf6 25 Bxe7 Qxe7  
6 d3 e6 26 Re4 Rf8  
7 Qg3 Nbd7 27 Rxd4 Rxd4  
8 Be2 b5 28 Qxd4 Rf8  
9 a3 Qb6 29 Qe5 a6  
10 0-0 g5 30 Re1 Qh4  
11 Bf4 Be7 31 Re7 Rg8  
12 Bf3 0-0 32 d4 Qb6  
13 Rf6! Rac8 33 d5 exd5  
14 h4 Kh8 34 Bxd5 Rf8  
15 Re2 d4 35 g3 g5  
16 Nb1 c5 36 Rf7 Rf8  
17 Nd2 c4 37 Qc7 Rf8  
18 e5 Ne8 38 Qe7 Rf8  
19 Ne4 Ng7 39 Rf8 resigns  
20 Bg5 Qd8

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# Who will house all these prisoners?

Having filled up its hastily purchased Portakabins with prisoners, the Home Office is to commandeer a former American missile base in Suffolk and turn it into a makeshift jail. Some peace dividend: the fruit of the ending of the Cold War is space for the nation's burgeoning population of convicts.

But surely the Prison Service is being somewhat unimaginative. The Ministry of Defence is awash with surplus land and gear. The Navy is in decline. We know that because admirals were only this week passed over for the job of Chief of Defence Staff. That must mean that there are destroyers, maybe even a carrier, spare. So why not do what the government did when it had all those French prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars and re-commission the hulks - floating prisons? It would add verisimilitude to the British Tourist Board's promotion of Old London.

Alternatively, there are all those empty dungeons in the royal palaces and English Heritage's estate. Putting real, live prisoners in them would make the Bloody Tower and Dover Castle even more attractive to tourists - and give those overweight yeoman warders a real job of work at last. Failing that, we could turn one of the innumerable Scottish islands into an offshore prison - Alcatraz would have nothing on St Kilda as the ultimate escape-proof jail. Come on, Mr Howard, show some

imagination! Why stop at missile bases? What isn't a joke is that the Home Office has woefully miscalculated its numbers. For months, if not years, all sorts of makeshift arrangements are going to have to be made to accommodate the fast-expanding prison population. As we reported yesterday, magistrates' courts cells may be brought into use over Christmas. All such expedients are deplorable. Convicts or those on remand held in temporary cells are unlikely to have access to even a basic prison regime. This flouts the principle that all prisoners should be subject to uniform conditions and that to their loss of liberty should not be added unpredictable variations in the conditions under which they are held. It is also likely to be expensive, requiring supernumerary private-sector staff to be brought in. As for the American air base scheme, it seems that the Ministry of Defence may even be asked to "donate" its police for patrols. They will not have been trained in guarding prisoners and may well end up reducing rather than improving security.

Let's not argue, at this point, with the Home Secretary's basic policy, which is to make a prison sentence a more likely outcome of criminal proceedings. Michael Howard's reliance on statutory jail terms for a wider class of offences will have a direct and measurable effect on prison numbers. (Legislation to be announced in the Queen's Speech next



week will push up the prison population even further.) We disagree that these measures are going to be effective in terms of reducing the total volume of crime; they do purchase "time out" for criminals, off the streets, as the Home Secretary has said, but the cost is huge.

But it is entirely legitimate for Michael Howard to pursue such a policy - provided he and his government colleagues are prepared to will the means. The prison population is, of course, not "controllable" by the Home Office in daily detail; it is determined by the decisions of the courts. But the Home Secretary sets the tone for sentencing decisions as well as the tariffs. He is certainly responsible for the projected growth. But has he secured the wherewithal? Richard Tilt, the director-general of the Prison Service, says no. Even if we discount Mr Tilt's complaints for the time of year they are issued - it is the season for annual bargaining between spenders and the Treasury - he bears witness to fiscal backsliding. High rhetoric from the Home Secretary, and big promises at the Tory Party conference, are being followed by a refusal to honour the commitment.

All this is rapidly shaping up as a shambles. It looks as if these temporary arrangements involving camps and court cells will persist. If so, it will amount to a *de facto* alteration in the penal regime for large numbers - unlegislated and unwilling. There will be less

security. The Home Office deserves a legal challenge - though it could be Home Secretary Jack Straw who has to field it.

So the delivery of a policy which the Government has been trumpeting is failing. Almost as important as that fact is the symbolism of this cock-up. It damages the very authority of the state. Confidence that government has the power and competence to deliver as promised is a precious thing. It deserves the care and concern not just of those who believe government should do more but also of liberals, temperamentally allergic to undue state interference, and those who would like the state to be smaller. Ineffective government is no substitute for limited government - it is no more than a recipe for resentment and irritation which can sometimes spill over into a contempt for authority of all kinds.

Thatcherism's "big idea" was rolling back the state, freeing (as she saw it) enterprise; it remains the guiding principle of the Major government. But diminution of the effectiveness of government was no part of the lady's project, or her successor's. Lack of accommodation for an expanded population of prisoners bids fair to become a classic example of government failure.

It's an own goal for the Tories, but one that has consequences for many more of us than prisoners.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Complete handgun ban would prevent US-level child deaths

Sir: The willingness of the British Government to introduce legislation that goes further than Lord Cullen's recommendations is brave and welcome ("Britain declares war on the gun culture", 17 October).

However, there will remain a significant number of legally owned and lethal handguns available. In Britain we are fortunate in not having a society where guns are accepted as part of everyday life. Experience in the United States of America reflects the evolution of a "gun culture" which has not been held back by legal constraint.

Thus in 1990 there were 1.5 per 100,000 children between 10 and 14 years of age deliberately killed by guns in that country. This would be equivalent to around 68 deaths per year in the United Kingdom in that age group.

Six per 1,000 children visiting two emergency departments in Louisiana in 1993 were suffering from firearm injuries. This would be equivalent to 210 cases per year in the North Staffordshire Hospital, which 35,000 children attend annually. Between 35 and 38 per cent of families with children in the USA reported that 15 per cent had carried a gun within 30 days of the survey.

There are few opportunities to intervene in social/public health problems such as violence involving firearms. Once guns are pervasive in any society, as shown by the chilling statistics from the USA, there is almost no opportunity for "turning back the clock". The USA can be considered a laboratory for what can happen to children, along with all other citizens, if guns are widely available.

We urge our politicians to vote according to the future welfare of all our children and legislate now for a complete ban on handguns, recognising that at one time held legally.

Such an approach may also send a signal to other countries, such as the USA, assisting their politicians to take a similar stance.

Dr DAVID SOUTHALE  
Dr PAUL EUNSON  
Dr CARL BOSE  
Child Advocacy International  
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

Sir: Your leading article ("Ban all handguns now. There's nothing to lose", 17 October) correctly states that the only loss resulting from a blanket ban on all privately owned handguns would be to a handful of enthusiasts. Yet even they need not lose out.

It is not the handgun which does the damage, but the bullets which it fires.

Any child with a gun-like add-on for their video game knows that one can shoot down an entire alien invasion fleet without the need for bullets - all one needs is an infra-red source and a detector. No less steady a hand is required to hit a target with an electronic device than with a physical projectile and a .22 pistol.

As for the Olympics, fencing has already shown that what was once a weapon can, with the help of electronic technology, be used in sport without any reduction in the skill required.

JOHN CHESTER  
Leeds, West Yorkshire

Sir: Rarely have I read such sanctimonious twaddle as in your leader calling for the banning of all handguns (17 October).

The hysteria over pit-bull-type dogs resulted in bad law, unnecessary cruelty and an infringement of civil liberties. Hysteria over Dumbbells is likely to result in infringement of civil liberties and no guarantee that a similar tragedy will not occur. If the legislation results in gun ownership going underground the dangers may even be increased.

There is no protection against the actions of a seriously deranged person.

A far more interesting question is why Hamilton was so excluded from society that his problems were not addressed.

We consider the freedom to drive a car worth the price of hundreds of dead children.

It is not clear that a single child's life will be saved by a state monopoly on handguns, yet important freedoms will be infringed.

SIMON J. ELLIS  
Stone, Staffordshire



A lifeboat crew: why do they risk their lives? Photograph: Colorfoto

### Altruism is more than selfish genes

Sir: Andrew Brown goes over the top ("Altruistic equations that killed a good man", 14 October). Bill Hamilton's maths may be sound, but support a dubious thesis: the selfish gene-ery spin on Darwinian evolution.

There are other ways of explaining altruism in animal behaviour. It may well be that altruism occurs in all social species because being social - the social good - requires it: while the individual good necessarily results, to a significant extent, from the common good.

Hence everyone benefits from altruism, not just someone's genes. Try to imagine a social species in which self-interest dominated everyone's behaviour, or had to be knocked out of each individual in its infancy.

The common good in practice is the good of an individual's community, not some vague abstraction. It is the community which benefits from altruistic

behaviour, and that need not be made up of related individuals: a platoon of soldiers or a lifeboat crew, for instance.

To argue, as Hamilton does, that their concern for one another derives from selfish gene-ery via kinship "altruism", or that the self-sacrificing squaddle is indirectly serving the selfish interests of his genes - is at best unconvincing.

It is interesting just how welcoming are the social and academic environments to evolutionary theories - educated guesses, speculations, evangelical crusades like Richard Dawkins's - which find greed, competition and selfishness at the root of human behaviour, or in the dirt around the root.

There are different ideas - Kropotkin's mutual aid; Professor V C Wynne-Edwards's group selection - and informed criticisms of selfish gene-ery which merit equal attention. DICK FROST  
Orton, Cumbria

### New oil fields a backward step

Sir: Nicholas Schoon ("Rio summit's green pledges to be broken", 17 October 11), reports from an oil industry conference that Britain and Germany are "world leaders in pressing countries to take the global warming threat seriously." Every other major industrial country is expected to fail its Rio commitment to cap carbon dioxide emissions, while Britain and Germany's marginal reductions are a side-effect of industrial restructuring.

This is all good news for oil companies. British Environment Secretary John Gummer attacked the fossil fuel (oil) lobby at the August climate talks. But the British government is actually expanding oil production: it is licensing BP to open vast new oil fields west of Shetland, on the Atlantic frontier.

This is wrong: morally, rationally, politically. Five years on from Rio, governments accept the reality of global warming. By now they should have signalled that fossil fuels will end, by beginning the end of oil.

Wake up John Major, wake up Tony Blair. Stop the drilling, put out the fires, turn off the taps, send back the ships and leave the ocean to the whales. Crank up your carbon taxes, lag your horns, change your light bulbs, loathe the wind and plug in the sun.

CT ROSE  
Campaign Programme Director  
Greenspace UK  
London N1

### Hair for hunting

Sir: Christopher Hill (Letters, 16 October) quite rightly offers Elaine Morgan's theory as an alternative to the Savannah orthodoxy on human evolution, but misrepresents much of it.

Hairlessness lets us lose heat very rapidly, so we can run for very long periods, far longer than any other hunting mammal. Further, the pinnipeds (seals etc) are all covered in hair, and are conspicuously aquatic. Neoteny is common in higher mammals, particularly predators and primates.

In fact, most of the reasons he cites are actually good evidence for our hunting (carnivorous) past. There are much better pieces of evidence for our semi-aquatic ancestry.

For example, for proper neural development we need fatty acids found in large quantities only in fish: no other primate has this dependency.

If new-born babies are submerged in water, they automatically hold their breath, and reflexively tilt their heads up as they are brought to the surface.

Finally, though Elaine Morgan's views are not yet entirely orthodox, a substantial minority of biologists now accept them. STEPHEN R GOULD  
London SW5

### Masons as jurors?

Sir: With reference to "Masons make better jurors, say judges" (15 October) ... these are the chaps who assemble in darkened rooms, refuse to admit women, wear regalia which the average drag queen would consider rather OTT, bare various portions of their anatomy whilst giving each other funny handshakes and muttering secret passwords and take an oath which owes more to *Just William* and the Gang of the Black Hand than the Royal Courts of Justice ... ? Or did the Court of Appeal in Guernsey misdirect itself?

B J CAIRNS  
London N22

## LETTER from THE EDITOR

It has been a sad and solitary editor's week, waiting for the phone call, pacing the hall in the darkness of early morning, desperately hoping for the barely audible thock of cream-coloured envelope on leaf-encrusted doormat. But no. The invitation to pack bowtie, sagging peacock-suit (more of a wainsuit, in my case) and head to Brighton to party with the Referendum Party, has not come. All London is said to be going. All the in, intelligent, forceful and attractive people ... bar one, it seems. This despite the fact that *The Daily Telegraph's* peroxide-wigged ballet correspondent Boris Johnson has publicly announced that I am invited. The shame! The public humiliation!

Can this be because we are on the other side? Perhaps the position of this paper is to be in favour of referendums on big constitutional issues, including British membership of the single currency - but thoroughly and implacably against the Referendum Party. We could, of course, have been bought for a glass of warm champagne. But it is too late.

As it happens, I have met Sir James Goldsmith for dinner once, and was mightily impressed, though unconvinced by his passionate hostility to free trade. He possesses extraordinary ice-blue eyes, whose gleam made artificial lighting unnecessary, and more interesting facts about 19th-century trade patterns than a well-stocked university library. These things are not necessarily a recommendation but I mention them to emphasise that he is, in his way, a formidable debater and would give most professional politicians a serious fight on television.

The Referendum Party's choice of louches Brighton for its rally has caused much banter about the whiff of Regency, big-money socialising that surrounds it (and so on.) And today, despite the Thatcher-Major reconciliation, the Referendum Party seems strikingly like the provisional wing of the Margaret Thatcher Tendency. No one makes much of this. But it is pretty rum. It is almost as if Neil Kinnock's former advisers and allies were currently working with Arthur Scargill against William Pitt to Goldsmith's Primmy and McAlpine's Beau Brummell (well, no parallel can be exact) affects not to care. But he must be livid at today's jolly antics. Almost as hurt as I am, perhaps.

Some readers have complained about our use of the Clare Short story on the front page. It is not, admittedly, our normal page one fare. But it seemed a piece of genuine good news, a happy ending for decent people. And it's pretty rare that you get that in any front page, never mind our one.

adviser, is a Goldsmith cheerleader. Lord McAlpine, the Thatcherite former Tory treasurer, is another. Goldsmith has plenty of mates among right-wing Tory MPs.

Thatcher and John Major were formally reunited at the Tory conference in Bournemouth, though these conference reconciliations are elaborately artificial affairs. (I heard recently that during the Thatcher years, there would be detailed and tense annual negotiations between her office and Ted Heath's lot about where the two outside egos would "accidentally" meet; who would proffer the handshake,

The Referendum Party's choice of louches Brighton has caused much banter about the whiff of Regency big-money socialising that surrounds it

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Andrew Marr

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

Politicians are the most despicable human subspecies I have come across in a long and varied life - Sir James Goldsmith, Founder of the Referendum Party.

When I first entered Parliament in 1959, I thought I was joining the best club in London. Today one might as well sign the book at Raymond's Revue Bar - Tory MP Sir Julian Critchley.

Conkers players tend to peak older - John Ball, the 74-year-old pensioner crowned men's champion at this year's World Conker Championships.

I must confess that most of the time I do not understand my own regulations - Emma Bonino, the European Union Fisheries Commissioner.

Nit only is it true, but I understand that in the Tory Party today it is compulsory - Nicholas Soames, Armed Forces Minister, asked in the Commons if it was true that bromide was still given to servicemen to control their sexual urges.

Well done, Clare. We're all bloody human! - Van driver to Clare Short, who was posing with the son she gave up for adoption.

We have become the overtime capital of Europe, with many people being forced to work long hours through no choice of their own ... We are witnessing a return to the days of the Victorian workhouse - Stephen Byers, Labour employment spokesman.

### Act now on Irish peace talks, before election muddies the water

Sir: Your editorial "Another small step along the road to peace" (16 October) suggested that the electoral considerations of the Northern Ireland parties made further progress in the peace talks unlikely between now and a general election.

No one would dispute that the level of public support for the parties is important to all concerned, but so is the level of public support for peace. It would be in the clear interest of all to make as much progress as possible before general election campaigning forces public confrontations on the basis of moderates versus hard-liners.

Bi-partisanship in Westminster has helped to ensure that Labour is not waging with the Tories for positions on Northern Ireland. At worst it is portrayed as a competition on the basis of the commitment of the party leaders. Your editorial repeated this point. Having spent an hour on Wednesday talking with Tony Blair about the current state of progress in the talks I have no doubt of his interest and commitment.

Looking forward to a change of

government, you are right to suggest that "Labour's base position is correct", but you overlook that we have always said that change is necessary. We know there is not consent for a united Ireland among unionists, but it is equally clear that the existing status does not have the consent of nationalists.

That is why we need new arrangements and structures that both communities can support. The status quo is not an option.

Our policy, as set out in *New Labour, New Life for Britain*, shows our commitment to reconciliation between the two communities, and unity of the peoples of Ireland. John Hume has emphasised for us all the value of thinking and talking in terms of people not territory. As he says, it's people who have rights. It's people who are divided.

We believe that reconciliation needs to be based on respect for each community's sense of allegiance - whether that is to Ireland or to Britain - which means, primarily, working to build agreement around institutions

which all people can share and which both unionists and nationalists can support.

Labour argues that a new settlement needs to: embrace balanced constitutional change in Britain and Ireland; increase North-South co-operation as a matter of common sense; make the border less relevant; fully respect the identities and aspirations of both traditions; and provide for a strong, devolved assembly based upon proportional representation.

To help underpin the process of change, we have to build confidence too. Given the opportunity, there are some important things Labour will do to help this, such as: incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into our law; consulting with the parties on a home-grown bill of rights; taking steps to make the police more accountable and representative; toughening up the fair employment legislation; and taking decisive action to reduce tension over the parades.

For now, we are calling on all parties to take an extra step forward. That's why I visited loyalist prisoners in the Maze prison. I welcome the step taken by David Trimble in visiting them.

The maintenance of the loyalist ceasefire is an essential element in making progress. And the restoration of the IRA ceasefire is crucial too. You suggest that progress is being made in the absence of Sinn Fein and that is true. But it cannot be unconditionally excluded from the process. That would only strengthen the hand of the militarists.

The IRA has to call a ceasefire and Sinn Fein has to show its commitment to peace and democracy in word and deed. If they do, both governments should continue to say that there is a place for them at the talks. MARJORIE MOWLAM MP  
Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary  
House of Commons  
London SW1

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## the saturday story

## Looking for justice in the East End

Mary Walz was promised half a million pounds by Barings. 'Mrs Taylor' fiddled the computer to pay her own council tax. Will the law treat them with the same consideration? By Louise Jury

In neighbouring rooms of the Stratford industrial tribunal in east London, two women are fighting for their employment rights.

In Room Three there is Mary Walz, a feisty, 36-year-old American more accustomed to the boardroom than to concrete and chipboard tribunal offices in one of the scruffier parts of the capital. She is fighting Barings Bank for a £500,000 bonus she claims she was owed when the bank crashed with £630m losses run up by the rogue trader Nick Leeson in Singapore.

In Room Two is a small, scared woman a few years older - we'll call her Janet Turner. She committed what was a tiny fraud compared with the dealings that broke Britain's oldest merchant bank. Yet her world has tumbled around her just as surely as the collapse at Barings.

Mrs Turner is a former housing benefit officer earning less than a sixth of Ms Walz's basic £92,000, who fiddled the council computer to defer paying her own poll tax bill when she was in dire financial circumstances and under significant work stress. She is now desperate to win a case of unfair dismissal against the London Borough of Islington.

The two women are equal before the tribunal chairmen charged with deciding their cases. But there the similarity ends. Where Ms Walz has a

bright young barrister (and Barings a QC), Mrs Turner has a solicitor acting alone (against a barrister for the council). Ms Walz determinedly briefs her legal team with verbal and written notes on her banking opposition; Mrs Turner sits awed and largely silent, as her chance of proving that she was not given a chance slips slowly away. In everything, they live half a million pounds apart.

The doorman knows which is the sexy story. "You a journalist?" he asks as I arrive clutching newspapers and a heavy bag of notebooks. He does not even ask why I am there. "You want Room Three," he says. That is Mary Walz. No one is interested in Mrs Turner and her sad tale. There is not a single other journalist there.

Mary Walz is a City high flyer, a former director of Barings who was global head of equity financial products. One of the tabloids claimed that she sobbed when she gave evidence this week. She histles at the very thought for she is made of spangier stuff.

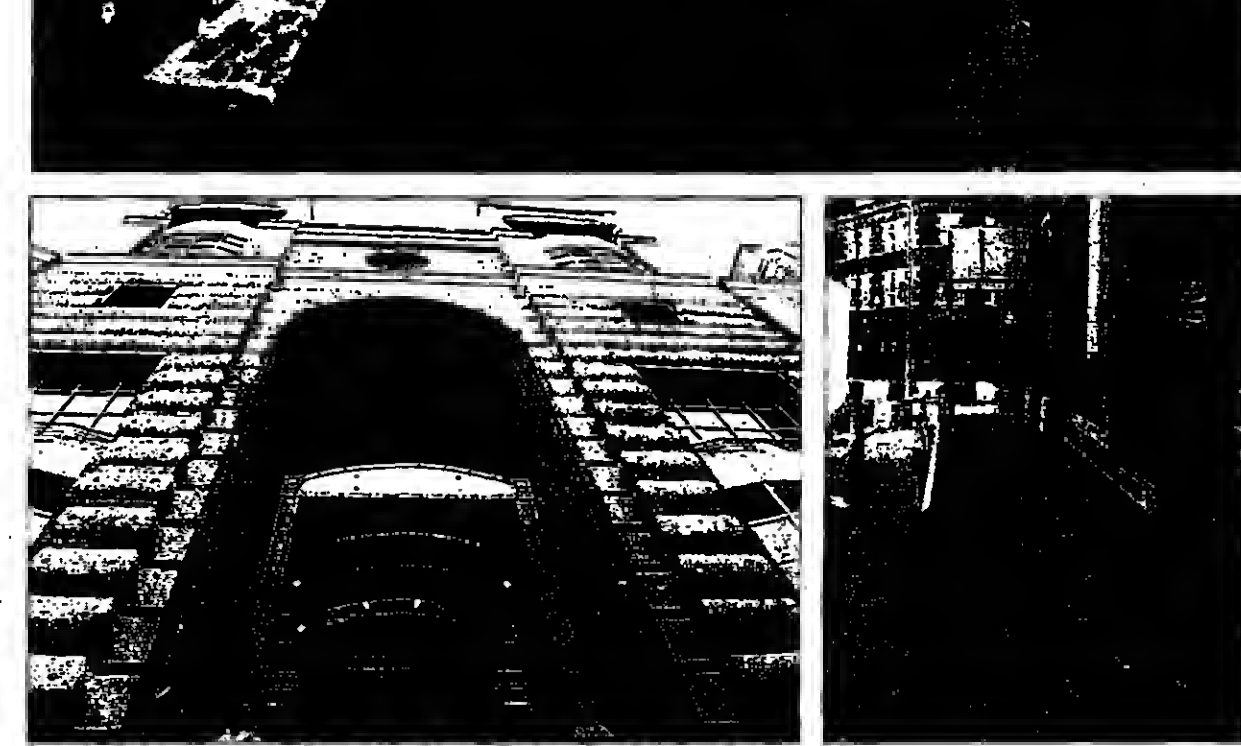
Ms Walz must know that half the country probably sympathises with Nicholas Underhill, Barings' QC. "It is surprising, to say the least," he said, "that Barings' global head of equity financial products should claim a bonus for the year in which such catastrophic losses were made, which led to insolvency." But despite the collapse - and to the apparent

amazement of some of her old colleagues - she is.

Next door, Janet Turner is sobbing. She dabs at her eyes with a tissue and looks drawn and drained as she tells her story. Crying, she apologises for her fraud. She was severely depressed, as psychiatrists testify, and under pressure - at times the only member of staff in what should have been an eight-person team, doing twice the borough's average case workload. Her home life was a catalogue of disasters and she had financial problems not entirely of her own making. After her fiddling came to light, conversations with her seniors wrongly reassured her that she might not be sacked. She was willing to work anywhere in the borough. If an alternative post away from the computers could be found.

Mrs Turner knows that what she did was wrong, and makes no excuses. All she is claiming is that the London Borough of Islington did not take all the circumstances into account before dismissing her after eight-and-a-half years' service and no prior misconduct. It is not exactly a common story, but it is more typically the stuff of tribunals than the case being heard next door.

Mary Walz, of course, is a "star" or at least she was told she was by Andrew Tuckey, Barings' deputy chairman, when 13 hours before learning of the Leeson disaster, he



Mary Walz (top) and the Barings office (left), Islington's housing benefit office (right)

handed her a slip of paper containing the words "Mary Walz - £500,000". It was what she had been expecting her bonus to be.

She had joined the bank in 1992 following another high flyer, Ron Baker, when he was recruited to head Barings' financial products group. The group was apparently doing well under the two of them. But that, of course, was based on the fictitious profits from Leeson's Singapore operations.

The bank considers Ms Walz to have been one of those responsible for Leeson, now serving six-and-a-half years in a Singapore prison for his dishonest financial dealings. In his book, *Rogue Trader*, Leeson himself names her as one of the four people to whom he reported. The Board of Bank-

ing Supervision's report into the Barings collapse criticises her as being one of those who failed to monitor Leeson carefully enough. It said: "Neither Mr Baker... nor Mary Walz, as head of equity products and having responsibility for risk for equity products, had any real understanding of the nature or true profit potential of Barings Futures (Singapore)'s apparent trading."

But Ms Walz denies that she was directly responsible for Leeson's activities. In the words of Antony Sander, her barrister: "She wasn't running the ship entirely single-handed - or, indeed, at all." She says that she was working extremely hard and gave "tremendous commitment" to her job. Like all staff, she knew the bonus was discretionary. As

she put it, "discretionary means for 365 days a year I can work my socks off and I may not get a bonus. Anything may happen until that time." But she believed that the figure was agreed when she met Andrew Tuckey at 11am on 23 February last year.

Mr Sander told the tribunal that the notification of the £500,000 bonus was a contract which had been broken and Barings, now owned by the Dutch bank ING, had illegally failed to pay it under the Wages Act. Mr Underhill disagreed. There was no "right" to the money at all. "It may be surprising that so important a benefit is non-contractual, but there are other well-known instances of that," he said. "Everyone recognises you may not get a penny."

As the complicated argument proceeded over three days this week, Ms Walz sat behind her legal team, listening intently, riffling through her giant file of papers and documents and sipping Diet Coke.

Though perhaps a little nervous - commenting sarcastically about the attention the case has received, touchily mocking the claims made against her - she had an engaging line in humour as she braced herself for the proceedings.

She laughed as the final day began with a bandful of press again waiting to take their seats. "Hard core," she said. "You're going to die today. It's going to be really boring."

In a fitted grey dress, suede shoes and pearl earrings, she was well turned out - as might be expected of a woman who

saw her annual salary rise from £80,000 in 1992 (with £100,000 bonus) to £93,000 (and £300,000 bonus) a year later. As she ran slim fingers through her hair, she looked not unlike the actress Jamie Lee Curtis. Her home is at Butlers Wharf, central London, the neighbourhood near Tower Bridge made fashionable by the style guru Terence Conran.

During the deliberations, Nick Leeson's name came up surprisingly infrequently, as did the question of Ms Walz's competence, though Mr Underhill did raise the issue of culpability as he headed towards his final comments.

Next door, matters appeared more concrete, the issues of right and wrong more obvious without the shadow of giant sums of money to confuse them.

At the time of Mrs Turner's offences there was a lot of housing benefit fraud, said Michael Davies, a council officer. Whatever Mrs Turner's circumstances, a warning instead of dismissal would have given the wrong message. The "purple book" governing the conduct of white-collar local authority workers was clear. "The public is entitled to demand... local government officer conduct of the highest standard," Mr Davies said.

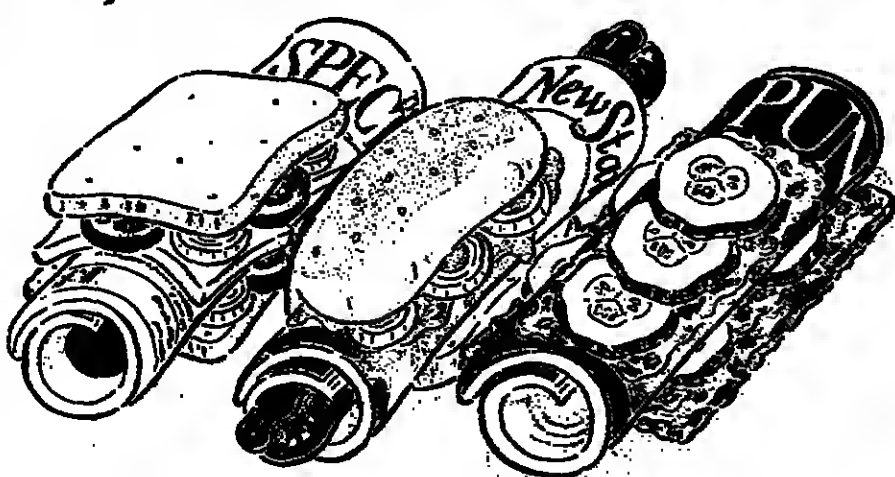
The language of council sub-committees and unions (even of strikes) could not have contrasted more sharply with the arguments next door over contracts and profit-sharing. At the end of two days, Mr Leonard, the panel chairman, said it was "impossible not to be moved by the unhappy history that was revealed". With the benefit of a number of papers not read out to the tribunal, he concluded: "Clearly Mrs Turner was a lady who has had to suffer considerable difficulties in her lifetime."

However, he went on, she had adjusted the computer three times fraudulently in her favour. The council had tried its best to help her, but it was, first and foremost, a public body with a duty to its taxpayers. The case was dismissed.

Afterwards, outside the tribunal offices, Mrs Turner cried. She stood forlornly, as if barely comprehending the decision, completely crushed by the case which had passed almost unnoticed even by the small world of local government in which she worked.

Ms Walz has a month to wait for her tribunal ruling. She would say nothing before it has made its findings. Her alleged role in the disastrous collapse of Barings has been plastered across newspapers in vivid detail and as she awaits disciplinary hearing by the regulatory body, the Securities and Futures Authority, the ordeal is not over yet. Yet whatever the tribunal decision, it is hard to imagine the American high flyer looking quite as desolate as the woman who pleaded her case next door. They remain worlds apart.

## OK, IF YOU LIKE SNACKING.



## BUT IF YOU WANT A REAL FEAST...

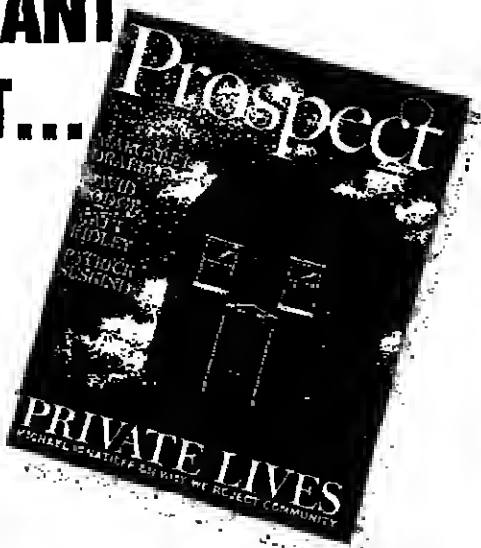
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## jo brand's week

I am in Germany for a few days visiting relatives and doing three nights at a new comedy club which has been set up by the London Comedy Store in Oberhausen. The evening will consist of two German comics and two English ones. We are all a bit trepidatious, as we are not quite sure what to expect. However, if it's anything like a gig I did in Holland recently, the German command of the English language will be more impressive than the English command of the English language.

In the race to make life safer for women, it seems the Germans are ahead. Arriving at a multi-storey car park in Paderborn, I discovered that one floor of it is designated women only. This seems like a very good idea to me. Women feel particularly vulnerable in places like these and whenever you watch a gangster film, people are always taken to car parks like this to be dispatched to the great protection racket in the sky. One added advantage to a woman-only floor is that it smells nice. Women don't tend to relieve themselves in public with the same regularity that men do.

"The Bird", the equivalent of *The Sun* here in Germany, arrives, deceptively, in broadsheet form. However, when you get down to it, you discover the stories are very similar. However, there was one I liked about a woman drug smuggler who arrived from Columbia. On being asked her job, she replied, "Art historian", at which point customs officials questioned her on what she knew about Gothic art. Of course, she didn't know anything, so they searched her luggage and found loads of cocaine. Rule No 1 for the drug smuggler... If

you are going to bullshit, at least do it about something you have a minimal amount of knowledge on.

A recent case of a British soldier in Paderborn points to the danger of placing too much faith in medical evidence. The soldier was accused of killing his baby daughter, after he had brought her to casualty saying she had fallen from a chair. Doctors decided this was untrue and that he had, in fact, caused the damage himself. However, X-ray evidence showed that the injuries sustained by the child were consistent with the man's story. So, not only did this poor guy lose a child, he found himself accused of her killing. Our unwavering faith in the medical profession needs to be tempered with a touch of cynicism. I won't say a pinch of salt, because some doctors will write in and say that is bad for me.

In the former East Germany, it is very reassuring to see that the capitalist ethos is flourishing in some quarters at least. A new schnapps has just come on to the market which is called, and I translate, "Erich's Revenge", after the esteemed Mr Honecker. "Erich's Revenge" is selling like hot cakes,



millions of bottles a day. Nice to know that life is so sweet in former East Germany that they have to be completely plastered all the time.

If you want something done, do it yourself. This was no doubt the thinking behind the actions of a German Green Party politician this week. The Green Party in Germany are currently pushing to legalise cannabis, and this geener, not content with how fast things were moving, phoned the police and grassed himself up for growing the stuff (no pen intended I assure you). At least it's got him some publicity for the cause, although it's possible he may be giggling too much to fight his corner.

Back to England, and another example of how responsible the tabloid press can be, was demonstrated this week by the *Sport*, which published the work phone numbers of four women who were protesting about the setting

up of a table dancing bar in Manchester. So far they have succeeded in banning it, and *Sport* readers, who can obviously only do two things - look at the pictures in the *Sport* and... well, I'll leave the other up to your imagination - have been raining threatening and obscene phone calls into the ears of the aforementioned women. "Ah," I hear you cry, "that's three things they can do, if they can use the phone." True, they've probably had a fair bit of practice on other obscene lines.

Lots of us have difficult neighbours, but it must be hard to think of a situation quite as bad as that faced by the Parkin family, who live next door to a convicted rapist. This is a rapist, too, who appears only to go as far as next door, having broken into that particular house twice; on one occasion he raped a woman while her children slept next door and on another, stabbed the husband of a different woman he was holding at knifepoint. Having been made aware of this, the current occupant of the house and her three daughters have gone, leaving Mr Parkin in residence. Added to this, a campaign has been launched in the local press to monitor the rapist's behaviour. This has upset his family, who say he is trying to go straight. Meanwhile, the police have fitted the house with an alarm system. I think this is one that even King Solomon would struggle with, although, in my view, cutting something in half might



regional variations

My friend Mr Townsend's doctrine of just deserts has not been universally admired

# David Aaronovitch



I am rare, in these days of doctored spin, to find a politician who is prepared to put his head above the parapet, stick out his neck and tell it like it is. But one such is my old friend John Townsend, Rotarian and the Conservative MP for Bridlington. I can assure readers that John's neck is extended, his head well-clear of the ramparts and his mouth is working overtime.

We first met, as I remember, at a Northern Conservative Women's Bazaar in the early Eighties. Mrs Thatcher was at her apogee, and Mr Townsend had just won first prize at the Tombola - a Magnum of Dom Perignon which he, as a successful wine merchant, had originally donated. As those around him celebrated his victory, he turned to me and spoke words that I will never forget. "I deserve this", he said. Just that.

Ever since that day I have followed Mr Townsend's career with interest. For it seemed to me that he had captured an important truth in those three simple words - that it was morally and practically important for people to get what they deserved. And, by way of logic, it was equally important for people not to get what they didn't deserve. So I observed Mr Townsend's rise from backbench obscurity to the most prominent positions to which a politician, not actually called to the ministerial purple, can aspire. I applauded as he stormed into the chairmanship of the Conservative backbench finance committee, and toasted his election to the executive of the 1922 committee. Like that day so many years before he was, I felt, getting what he deserved.

As one might expect with any man of principle, Mr Townsend's ascent has been accompanied by controversy; his doctrine of just deserts not being universally admired. Just this week he has issued a set of proposals encapsulating his philosophy, and the reaction has ranged from the apathetic to the down-right uninterested. But it seems to me that readers of *The Independent* need to be familiar with them. My friend's proposals

include: cuts in benefit for new-age travellers (who do not deserve help because they are not really available for work), teenage single mothers (whose lack of husbands force them to sponge off the state), and for ridiculously big families who are dependent on unemployment benefit. "We should use the benefit system to discourage people from having large families, when they cannot afford them," he writes in this month's *Parliamentary Review*.

The beneficial effects of large cuts in the support of the undeserving poor will be threefold. First, a strong message will be sent about what kinds of behaviour society is prepared to tolerate. Second, those who are feckless or stupid will pay directly for their fecklessness and stupidity. And finally, money will be made available to reward the deserving for their efforts, in the form of tax cuts.

Having wielded the stick, Mr Townsend can now produce his carrot. Savings thus gleaned, he argues, can be expended on allowing those (usually hard-working professionals) who employ cleaners, nannies and gardeners, to offset the cost of their wages against tax. This will, of course, increase employment in the domestic sector.

The boldness of this vision is breathtaking. New Age Travellers, forced from their peripatetic nuisance-making, can find environmentally friendly employment in the gardens of successful entrepreneurs and journalists. The few remaining illegitimate children, or the unwanted offspring of over-large families, can be inducted into service in even quite modest homes. They need never know what it is not to have work.

By so enormously increasing the gap between the penalties for failure and the rewards of success, Mr Townsend accomplishes an important piece of social engineering. He inculcates in all citizens a strong motive for succeeding. And thus - I am sure you will agree - brings the classless society that much closer. A brandy? Just ring the bell.

# Flirty Dancing

What makes tango so sexy? Sadler's Wells Theatre is keen to explain. The old Sadler's Wells may be a pile of rubble awaiting rebuilding, but meanwhile it has started a branch office at the Peacock Theatre in Portugal Street committed to promoting accessible, popular dance. Sadler's Wells at the Peacock launched itself this week with *Tango Por Dos*. Accessible? Definitely. Popular? You bet. Sexy? I should coco.

All dance (with the obvious exception of Morris Dancing) can be sexy. Social dance allows total strangers to embrace, theatrical dance gives you a cast-iron excuse to stare at beautiful bodies in a state of undress. Indeed, 19th-century ballet audiences were often accused of being there simply to gaze at the gussets of pretty young girls.

But is only sexy up to a point. Dancer's ability to scratch her ear with her big toe may well encourage her less sophisticated male admirers to imagine activities that would make the Kama Sutra look tame. But, generally speaking, classical ballet is too divorced from reality, too carefully choreographed to come anywhere near the earthy sensuality of the tango.

It's not for want of trying, of course. The late Sir Kenneth MacMillan led a singlehanded crusade to include as many sexual acts and perversions as possible in the ballet repertoire: rape, oral rape, gang rape; you name it, he toyed with it. But however powerful the resulting dance, the resulting emotions are always those of a spectator.

The exciting thing about tango is that it is an ordinary social dance. Even at its most sublime, it always looks as if you, too, after a couple of lessons, could take a turn around the floor with an ageing rout in double-breasted pinstripes. Indeed, tango classes are springing up all over the country to feed just such a fantasy.

Tango began in the poor suburbs of Buenos Aires in the second half of the 19th century. Rooted in the Milonga and the Habanera, it incorporated more of the more frenzied pelvic movements of African dance, thus disqualifying itself from polite society.

Argentina may have been a melting pot of cultures after the huge influx of Spanish, Italian and British immigrants but that didn't mean it didn't have standards. Buenos Aires was the Paris of the Southern Hemisphere, its magnificent boulevards and town houses designed by French architects. People who had got off the boat over a generation ago were very



keen to keep out the riffraff. Even today Buenos Aires is a city that has both a Harrods (no relation) and a Huddingham Club, a city where all the private schools play cricket. But fashion was always something you imported. At the turn of the century the new dance form slipped across to Paris where it immediately found favour. Its popularity grew over the next two decades, thanks partly to the international success of Rudolph Valentino, the archetypal Latin lover. By this time even the swooty anglophiles of La Recoleta were happy to import their home grown traditions now that they had received the Parisian seal of approval.

Meanwhile, in North America, the vogue for outlandish dances made the tango all the rage, but its sensuality was soon neutered by the prissy intervention of Vernon and Irene Castle the proud parents of modern ballroom dancing. The Castles sanitised the tango, washing it clean of all the saucy lechery that made it so thrilling to watch (and which led that notorious old killjoy Pope Pius X to ban it in 1914).

The result was the International Tango, a dreary little walk without passion or danger that brought the very name of tango into disrepute.

For years in Britain tango was just the novelty act in the Latin section of *Come Dancing* in which sequin-encrusted dental hygienists from Dorking sashayed across our screens clasped as one by deliciously happy estate agents.

In Paris, it was different. Although the initial craze had passed, there were always tango salons where the true enthusiasts could hang out. It was to Paris that Tango Argentino made its first European trip in 1983. This Buenos Aires-based company reminded the world what they were missing. For the past few years tango companies have been regular visitors to London and the effect on audiences has been extraordinary. You don't walk away from a ballet performance determined to buy a

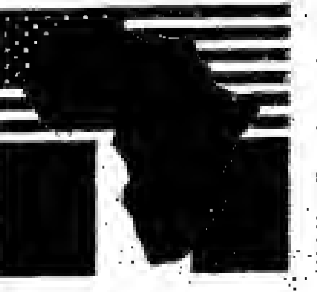
## Mr Christopher visits the dark continent

American Secretaries of State have a habit of coming a cropper over Africa. A typical example of the genre took place in 1969, when Richard Nixon sent his then Secretary of State, William Rogers, to Ghana for a visit arranged with an eye on coverage by the US media. The tour provided a source of innocent merriment to Ghanaians, when during his speech at a gala reception, America's number one diplomat referred to the Ghanaian Prime Minister, the Dr Kofi Busia, as "Dr Busio".

A few years later, the redoubtable Henry Kissinger, triumphant over his feats in the Far East, thought he would take a Tarzan-type swing across Africa and add a solution to the Rhodesian problem to the trophies marking his "world" accomplishments.

He, too, came new to the continent, and therefore knew little of the prickly temperament of its leaders. So having initially excluded Ghana from his list of countries, he thought he could hastily pencil it in, when one of those on his list dropped out. The US Ambassador in Ghana happened to be the famous former child movie star, Mrs Shirley Temple Black. Under orders from Washington, she used her considerable charms to get the Ghanaian Foreign Ministry to invite Kissinger.

But the country's military ruler of the time, General Ignatius Acheampong, was later



US Secretaries of State rarely visit Africa, and Warren Christopher's trip typified the attitudes they bring with them

By Cameron Duodu

apprised of the fact that Ghana, "The Mother Of African Independence", had only got on to Kissinger's itinerary as a "second best". Acheampong bristled, and while the US Secret Service was busy turning several suites of Accra's Continental Hotel into a miniature "war room" for Kissinger, Acheampong issued a terse press statement, giving what must go down in history as perhaps the most bizarre excuse ever given by one statesman for not being able to see another. Acheampong claimed he had developed "a boil on his bottom", and consequently had been ordered to his bed by his doctor.

I was reminded of these vignettes of America's relations with Africa by the frenetic tour that the present Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, has just made to Africa. Christopher carried in his pockets two very controversial proposals. The first suggested the establishment, with American financial assistance, of an "African Intervention Force", to be sent to areas of civil strife. His second idea was to canvass African support for the US campaign to prevent the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, from being elected to a second term.

On the face of it, the "African Intervention Force" idea is quite sound. If such a force had existed in 1994, and had been dispatched to Rwanda, it would doubtless have been able to save the lives of some of the

hundreds of thousands of Tutsis brutally slaughtered by Hutus.

But why is the US exhibiting this concern for the lives of Africans now, when in 1994, it failed to provide the UN - which had troops in Rwanda - with the backing that could have enabled it to save the lives of the Tutsis? And why isn't the US providing adequate financial assistance to support the West African Econom (economic community monitoring group) force sent to save lives in Liberia?

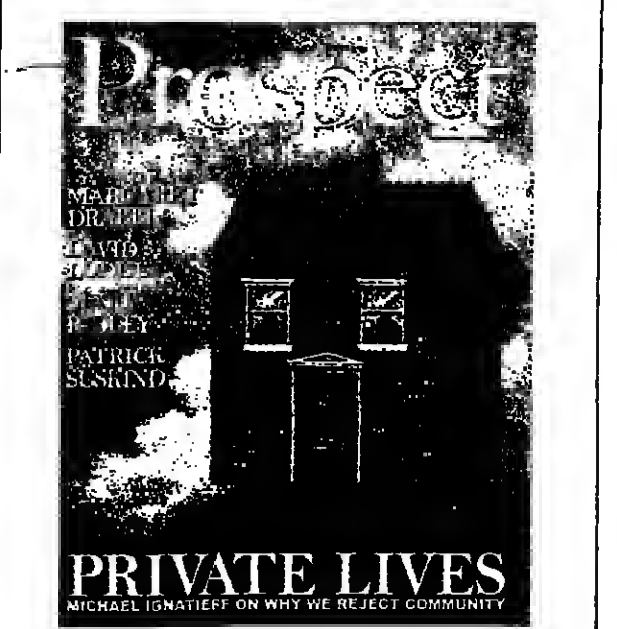
In fact, the UN felt so weak in Rwanda that it actually withdrew the bulk of its troops from Rwanda, just as the terrible genocide was beginning. The blame for this must be shared equally by the UN secretariat and the permanent members of the Security Council. But the US must take the greater portion of the blame, for as the only acknowledged "superpower" left from the Cold War, it ought to contribute most to the UN's peace-keeping efforts.

Yet the US has deliberately refused to pay its contributions to the UN. This creates the suspicion that the US secretly resents the UN's ever-increasing role, as the only "rival" to America's desired status as moderator-in-chief of the new global order.

From this perspective, the US desire to remove Boutros-Ghali from the UN also appears sinister. Has the Secretary-General proved impervious to American "arm-twist-

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## obituaries / gazette

## Professor Edith Penrose

Few women have had as distinguished a record as an economist as Edith Penrose. She was influential in the affairs of many countries and provided many new ideas on management, patents and petroleum, as a writer, as a member of committees and as a university professor.

Her best known book, *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*, published in 1959, brought her instant recognition as a creative thinker, and its importance to the analysis of the job of management has been increasingly realised. Earlier, she had published in 1951 a study of the economics of the international patents system. In 1968 she produced a book on the international petroleum industry, following it with a collection of essays in 1971. Her last book, written with her



Penrose: creative economics

husband, was on Iraq in 1978. Edith Tilton was born in Los Angeles in 1914 and began her university education there, marrying in 1934 at the age of 19 the surveyor of California Highway No 1. David Denhardt, who died four years later, leaving her

with a baby son (now Professor of Chemistry of Rutgers College). By that time she had moved to Baltimore, to take her MA and PhD under the supervision of Fritz Machlup at Johns Hopkins University, writing a thesis on the growth of the Hercules Powder Company that formed the basis for her later work on the growth of the firm. At John Hopkins she met Ernest Penrose, who held a chair in Economics and whom she eventually married in 1944 after working alongside him in Geneva and Toronto in the International Labour Office from 1939 to 1941. She also accompanied him to London where he was special adviser to John Winant, the US Ambassador, while she was appointed Special Assistant to him. From her second marriage she had three sons and enjoyed 40 years of happy

married life before Pen's death in 1984.

She had returned with her husband to Johns Hopkins in 1950 and was based there for the next 10 years. But after a campaign they conducted in support of Owen Lattimore, a professor accused of un-American activities, they fell foul of McCarthy and were more or less expelled, first to Australian National University in Canberra in 1955-56 on a Guggenheim fellowship, and then to Baghdad University in 1957-59. Thereafter they came to London in 1960 where she spent most of the next two decades.

At first she divided her time between the London School of Economics and the School of Oriental and African Studies, until in 1964 she accepted an appointment at SOAS as Professor of Economics with special

reference to Asia, which she held until 1978 with interruptions to go to Dar es Salaam in 1971-72 and Toronto in 1973. In due course she formed other attachments to British universities: to what became Templeton College, Oxford, from 1982 to 1985 and to Bradford University from 1989 to 1992. Some of her time was spent in seven years at INSEAD (Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires) in Fontainebleau between 1977-84, serving as Associate Dean in her last two years. By that time she was moving over more and more into management education.

These academic appointments were combined with many other activities. She was a member of the Sainsbury Committee on the pharmaceutical industry from 1965 to 1967 and the Medicines Commission

in 1975-78, and joined a committee on Chemical Research Ethics set up by the Royal College of General Practitioners. She also served on a variety of associations of economists, chairing the Economic Committee of the SSR/ESRC from 1970 to 1976, as Governor of the National Institute from 1974, on the Council of the Royal Economic Society from 1975 to 1980, a Director of the Commonwealth Development Corporation from 1975 to 1978 and a member of the Overseas Development Institute from 1992 to 1994. She received many honours, including honorary doctorates from the Universities of Uppsala and Helsinki and an award in 1986 from the British Association of Energy Economists for her many distinguished contributions.

A few years ago, she joined

forces with me in trying to persuade the European Court of Justice to refrain from using anti-dumping legislation against imports of low-cost Japanese photocopying machines, but without effect. The legislation was particularly unfair since the Japanese had helped to establish the industry in Europe. But the judges were unmoved by her arguments, leaving us convinced that they had very odd ideas of what constituted dumping.

Edith Penrose was petite, good-looking and very feminine. She had a balanced and attractive personality and spoke clearly and authoritatively. She was a popular member of Robert Maillat's Oxford Energy Policy Group from its foundation 20 years ago, the only woman present among the tycoons from the oil industry. What she had

to say was always listened to with great attention and deservedly so. She was always well-informed, sensible and penetrating in her judgements and kind in her expression of them.

Alec Calmeross

*Edith Tilton, economist: born Los Angeles 29 November 1914; As. soc. Prof. of Economics, University of Baghdad 1957-59; Reader in Economics, LSE and SOAS, London University 1960-64; Prof. of Economics, SOAS 1964-78 (Emeritus); Head, Department of Economics 1977-84 (Emeritus); Associate Dean for Research and Development 1982-84; married 1944 David Denhardt (died 1938; one son), 1944 Ernest Penrose (died 1984; two sons and one son deceased); died Waterhouse, Cambridgeshire 11 October 1996.*

## Berthold Goldschmidt

When the 20th century closes and lists are drawn up of the figures who distinguished it, the name of the composer and conductor Berthold Goldschmidt will rank high. But amazingly, after some early success in his native Germany, and his flight from Hitler to England in 1935, he endured more than half a century of semi-obscurity before achieving new recognition and finally, in his nineties, international fame.

Born and brought up in Hamburg, Goldschmidt was the second of the four children of Adolf Goldschmidt and his wife Henriette. Encouraged by them in his early musical ambitions, he was soon attending concerts and operas, and in 1922 he began his studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, primarily as a member of Franz Schreker's composition class, but also as a conducting student of Rudolf Krasselt.

After obtaining his diploma and winning the Mendelssohn Prize with his *Pasacaglia* for orchestra, he began his career in 1924 as a coach in the Dessau Opera House. Returning to Berlin in 1925, he found through Schreker an entrée to the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra as a freelance cellist player in complicated modern works. Again as cellist player, he took part in the world premiere, under Erich Kleiber, of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* at the Staatsoper in 1925. Soon after, Kleiber conducted the premiere of his *Pasacaglia*.

Goldschmidt's first important post was as Musical Advisor to Carl Ebert at the Landestheater in Darmstadt, where he remained from 1927 until 1930, when Ebert brought him back

to Berlin as his assistant at the City Opera (Städtischer Oper). Already before leaving Darmstadt, Goldschmidt had begun work on his early masterpiece *Der gewaltige Hahnrei*, an opera based on Ferdinand Crommelin's play *Le Cocu magnifique*. Meyerhold's historic production for the Moscow Arts Theatre had made a great impression on tour in Germany and elsewhere, though the play was also commercially successful, on account of its "scandalous" subject matter. (A London production in the 1930s memorably starred Peggy Ashcroft as the wife who is pushed into multiple infidelities by her monstrous husband.)

*Der gewaltige Hahnrei* was one of the last works by a Jewish composer to be staged in Germany before the Nazis came to power. After its successful premiere in Mannheim in 1932, Ebert announced a Berlin production for the 1933-34 season at the Staatsoper. But in fact the opera was not to be seen again for more than 60 years. Harry Kupfer's 1994 staging at Berlin's Komische Oper coincided with the release of Decca's recording of the work and was almost simultaneous with the world stage premiere of Goldschmidt's second and last opera, *Beatrice Cenci* – composed with an Arts Council prize, for the Festival of Britain in 1951, to a libretto adapted from Shelley by Martin Esslin.

It was not easy for Goldschmidt to establish a foothold in the British musical world after his arrival in 1935. At first he eked out a living by teaching and coaching. However, a commission from Kurt Jooss for

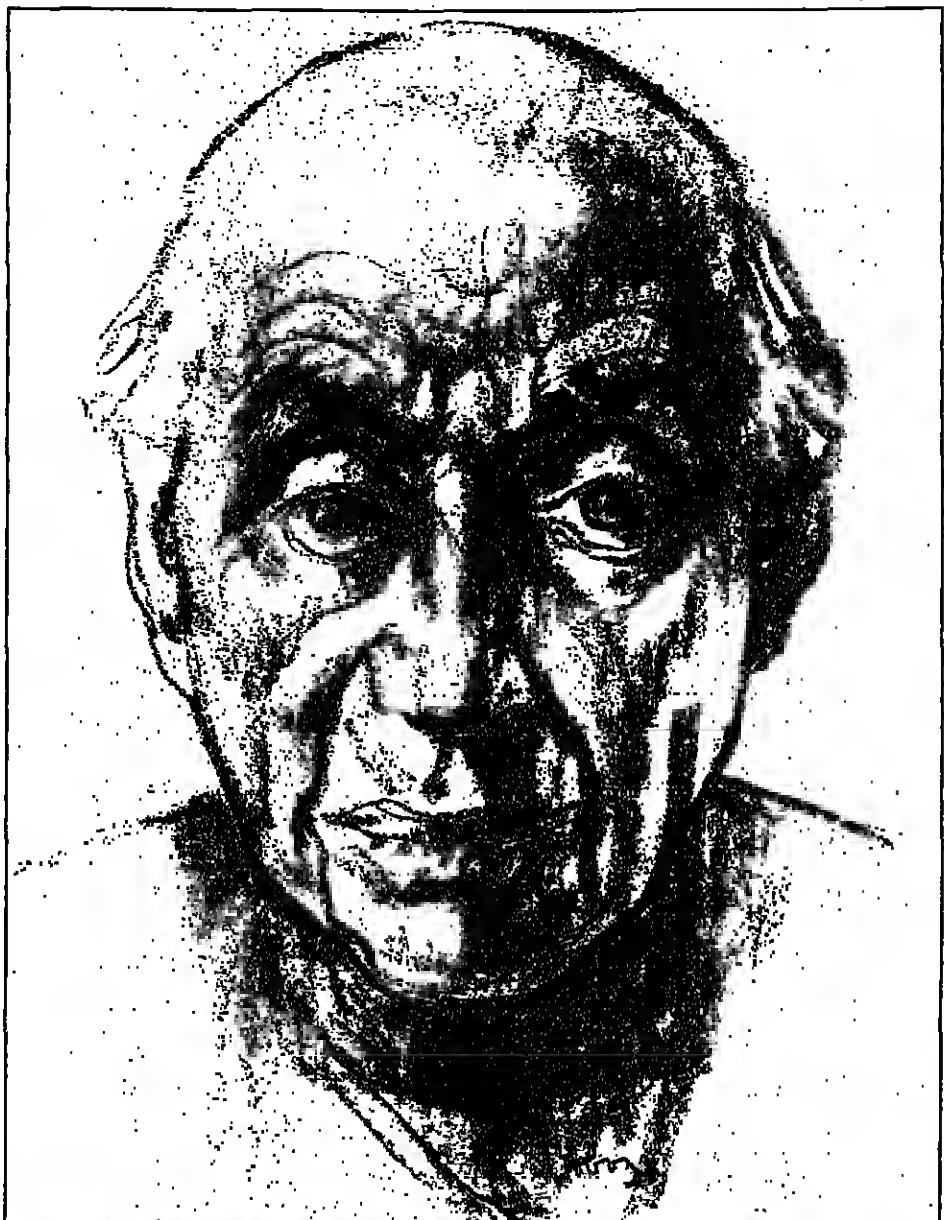
a score for his anti-fascist ballet *Chronica* proved highly opportune in 1938. Although the ballet had to be staged in a diplomatically censored form, it was successfully toured in Britain and in the Americas shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

During the war years Goldschmidt had little inducement to compose, and was largely occupied with his work for the BBC World Service at Bush House – where his friendship and collaboration with Martin Esslin began. His main task was to arrange and sometimes to conduct broadcasts to Germany of concerts which featured, among other things, music by such "forbidden" masters as Mendelssohn.

One of his earliest hopes in England had been to work with Carl Ebert at the newly established Glyndebourne Opera. But these were soon dashed, for Ebert and his colleagues had already engaged as many refugees from Germany as current labour regulations allowed. In 1947, however, Goldschmidt received an eleven-hour invitation to replace George Szell as conductor of Ebert's Glyndebourne production of Verdi's *Macbeth* at the first Edinburgh International Festival. The critics were enthusiastic, although in several cases they were still under the impression that the conductor had been Szell.

Despite this "successful" British debut as opera conductor, Goldschmidt's talents in this field were exploited only by the BBC. Nevertheless his reputation had been made in Scotland, and led to a long-lived guest-conducting with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra – which ended when Goldschmidt reached 60.

By then the musical ethos of the BBC had been radically changed. Goldschmidt's three large-scale concertos of the 1950s – respectively for violin, clarinet, and cello – had all been given their premieres in BBC studios. But their musical language which owed more to the classicism of Busoni and perhaps of Hindemith than to the eclectic lushness and romantic expressionism of his teacher Schreker, was ill-suited to the modernist criteria which prevailed in a period already dominated by the influence of Boulez, Stockhausen, and Nono. With the appointment in 1960 of William Glock as the



Goldschmidt's music mingles classical and modern elements. Drawing by Zsuzsi Roboz, 1993

BBC's Controller, Music, a new era had begun.

Though keenly interested in all new developments, Goldschmidt remained fundamentally unsympathetic to Schoenberg and Webern, and to their post-war advocates in the so-called Darmstadt school. Feeling himself out of joint with the musical times, he had allowed his *Mediterranean Songs* of 1958 to acquire the character of a farewell to composition: for nearly a quarter of a century he felt silent and did not resume composing until the time once again seemed to be ripe. However, he was by no means without support in the BBC of the 1960s. Among his closest friends and associates there were the composer Robert Simpson and the musicologist

Deryck Cooke. Recalling Goldschmidt's pioneering performances of Mahler in the 1950s Cooke had turned to him for advice while working on his reconstruction of Mahler's uncompleted *Tenth Symphony*, and it was Goldschmidt who conducted the first performances of the Cooke version, both in England and in Germany.

At the age of 80, Goldschmidt returned to composition, ostensibly in response to an invitation to compose a quartet for the clarinetist Gertrude de Peyer and three members of the Amadeus Quartet. In fact the quartet was his first response to a sense that the musical climate had changed once again and that there were new and young audiences for his music both in Europe and the US.

There followed a steady flow of compositions, in which the mingling of classical and modern elements which had been characteristic of his music since the 1920s is developed with new energy and originality. The years of silence had seemed tragic for their waste, but in truth they had not been wasted. For the Berthold Goldschmidt of the last years had lost none of his youthful vigour and humour, but had found a place for himself in the musical world that even his greatest admirers would once have found almost unimaginable.

John Calder

*Berthold Goldschmidt, composer and conductor: born Hamburg 18 January 1903; married 1936 Karen Bothe (died 1979); died London 17 October 1996.*

## David Gilroy Bevan

The first word that comes to mind when one thinks of David Gilroy Bevan is boisterous. That is in no way to suggest that he was a roisterer: he was, in fact, a teetotaler. But he was a man who campaigned in the General Election of 1979 in a red bus, followed by a fire engine which, he said, was to carry away bodies unhurried by local authorities during Lord Callaghan's winter of discontent in 1978, and who went on to win the supposedly safe Labour seat of Birmingham, Yardley with a majority of over 2,000 in a general election year in which most opinion polls predicted a Conservative defeat.

Gilroy Bevan began his political career at a tender age: he was only 14 when he went canvassing his neighbours in the Conservative interest. Over the years, he acquired a quite exceptional knowledge of how local authorities worked (he served on Birmingham City Council and later the West Midlands County Council from 1959 to 1981); and it was this knowledge that he put to good use in winning Yardley. His achievement can be compared to that of Charles Morrison, who – totally against the then odds – won Devizes for the Tories in 1963 and Teddy (now Sir Teddy) Taylor who served as MP for the same party in the working-class constituency of Glasgow from 1964 to 1979, when the seat was so radically altered by the Boundaries Commission that even a heretically active candidate could not hold it.

One of the great things about Gilroy Bevan was how much he enjoyed the mundane, and often simply boring, business of local government. The combination of flamboyance and assiduity in his character appealed mightily to his constituents: in 1983 he even won applause from them by declaring that the only thing he had against Yardley was the fact that it lacked a yacht basin.

It was, alas for him, the exuberance of his nature which denied him governmental office. Whips – and ministers or shadow ministers – are invariably consulted on appointments. William Whitelaw considered Gilroy Bevan not reliable enough even to enjoy the pleasures and pains of being a Parliamentary Private Secretary – the lowest form of governmental life; he was just too difficult.

Whenever his party – quite understandably – wanted to fudge an issue, Gilroy Bevan opposed them. He supported capital punishment in 1981, opposed sanctions on the old South Africa throughout its existence, and managed to lead Yardley until his defeat in 1992.

But he had a life outside politics. Born 68 years ago, the son of an evangelical minister and his equally religiously uncon-



Bevan: boisterous  
Photograph: News Team

promising wife, David Gilroy Bevan (like Antony Cusland in the Labour Party) went on to defy the austere instincts of his parents. He made a fortune as an estate agent in Birmingham, and purchased a yacht and a house in Spain.

But all the while, he was known for his combination of indulgence, eccentricity and decency. The yacht was an indulgence; his support of a charity devoted to giving wedding beads to deprived children (including two bears given from his own substantial collection); and his essential – if somewhat derided – support of the "Keep Sunday Special" campaign all testified to the essential honour of the man's character.

David Gilroy Bevan sat, for a while, on the Select House of Commons Committee on Transport. But I will lay odds that he never took money for asking a question. To adapt a phrase, "By their words shall ye know them".

Patrick Cosgrave

*Andrew David Gilroy Bevan, estate agent and politician: born 10 April 1928; MP (Conservative) for Birmingham, Yardley 1979-92; married 1967 Cynthia Ann Wilkins Bousfield (one son, three daughters); died 12 October 1996.*



Goldschmidt rehearsing Mahler's 10th Symphony with the Philharmonic Orchestra, London, 1960  
Photograph: Lebrecht Collection

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## BIRTHS

**McWALTERS:** On 2 October at Lewisham Hospital, London, to Mary Jane (Colo) and Tom, a son, Calum Thomas, a brother for Fergus. Many thanks to midwife Sheila and all well wishes.

## DEATHS

**GOLDSCHMIDT:** Berthold, on 17 October, peacefully in his sleep at home, aged 93, in accordance with his wishes the cremation will be private. Please no flowers or cards. A memorial concert will take place in 1997 to celebrate his life and his music.

**TOPPING:** On 17 October 1996, the Rev Don Christopher Topping, aged 86 years, monk of Ampleforth Abbey, Ripon, died peacefully at 12 noon.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax to 0171-293 2010. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

**TOMORROW:** The Duke of Edinburgh, President, World Wide Fund for Nature-WWF International, begins a 5 day visit to Germany and will attend the WWF Annual Conference in Berlin. The Prince of Wales, President, WaterAid, hosts a reception at Balmoral Castle.

**Changing of the Guard:** TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. The Royal Regiment of Wales mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Scots Guards. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

## Birthdays

**TODAY:** Mr Jack Anderson, newspaper columnist, 74; Sir Leslie Boreham, former High Court judge, 78; Professor Sir Robert Boyd, physicist, 74; Mr Matthew Carrington MP 49; Dr David Clark MP 57; Mr David Cornwell (John Le Carré), novelist, 65; Sir John Cullen, former chairman, Health and Safety Commission, 70; Mr John Evans MP 66; Professor Richard Freeborn, Emeritus Professor of Russian Literature at London University, 70; The Very Rev David Frayne, Provost of Blackburn, 62; Mr Bernard Hepton, actor, 71; Mr Gavin Hewitt, Ambassador to Croatia, 52; Dr Robin Holloway, composer and Lecturer in Music, Cambridge University, 53; Mr Paul Holmer, former ambassador to Romania, 73; Sir Robert Jennings, QC, former president, International Court of Justice, 83; Miss Rossmund John, actress, 53; Mr Graham Lock, former chief executive, Amalgamated Metal, 65; Mr Bill Morris, trade union leader, 58; Miss Mary Nicholson, broadcaster, 66; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Michael Follock, 80; Sir Allan Ramsay, former ambassador to Moscow, 59; Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Skingley, former Deputy Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Central Europe, 63; Sir Harold Walker, former ambassador to Iraq, 64; Major Sir Patrick Wall, former MP 80; Mr Peter Whiston, architect, 84.

**TOMORROW:** Sir James Ackers, former chairman, West Midlands Regional Health Authority, 61; Mr Hume Boggs-Rolle, barrister and farmer, 85; Sir Edwin Bolland, former diplomat, 74; Mr Art Buchwald, newspaper columnist, 71; Mr Chris Bradley, cricketer, 39; Professor Sir Bernard Croxall, mechanical engineer, 73; Mr Lawrence Daly, former trade-union leader, 72; The Right Rev Joseph Gray, Roman Catholic bishop of Shrewsbury, 77;

Mr Al Greenwood, rock musician, 45; Professor Sir Douglas Hague, chairman, Oxford Strategy Network, 70; The Rev James Harbison, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, 61; Mr Colin Jeavons, actor, 67; Mr Eddie Macken, showjumper, 47; Judge Deirdre McKinney, circuit judge, 68; Mr John Milne-Horne, former Lord Lieutenant, Dumfries and Galloway, 80; Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, founder, National Motor Museum, 70; Mr Tom Petty, guitarist and singer, 43; Sir Anthony Reeve, former ambassador to Soviet Union, 58; Mr Ian Rush, footballer, 35; Professor Samuel Saul, former Vice-Chancellor of York University, 72; Sir William Shapland, chartered accountant, 84; Sir Alexander Stirling, former diplomat, 70; The Hon Emma Tennant, writer, 59; Mr Timothy West, actor, 62.

## Anniversaries

**Births:** Alfred Dreyfus, army officer, 1859; Auguste-Marie Louis-Nicolas Lumiere, photographic pioneer, 1862; Deaths: Jonathan Swift, author, satirist and clergyman, 1745; George Mortimer Pullman, sleeping-car manufacturer, 1897; Ernest, first Baron Rutherford of Nelson, physicist, 1937. On this day: Napoleon began his retreat from Moscow, 1812; Wagner's opera *Ringhilde* was first performed, Dresden, 1845; the People's Republic of China was proclaimed, 1949; President Samora Machel of Mozambique and about 30 of his staff were killed in the plane crash on the South African border, 1986. Today is the Feast Day of St Aquillus of Evreux, St Charles Garnier, St Cleopatra, St Elbina, St Frida, St Gabriel Lalemant, Saint Jean Brebeuf and Isaac Jogues, St John of Lalande, St Noel Chabanel, St Paul of the Cross, St Peter of Alcantara, St Philip Howard, Saints Paterius and Lucius St Rene Goupil and St Varus.

**TOMORROW:** Births: Sir Christopher Wren, mathematician and architect, 1632; Odilon Redon, painter and lithographer, 1840; Jean-Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud, poet, 1854; Charles Edward Ives, composer, 1874; Anna Neagle (Marjorie Robertson), actress, 1904; Deaths: Jacopo della Gioconda, sculptor, 1438; Sir Richard Francis Burton, explorer and Arabic scholar, 1897; Jack Buchanan, actor and singer, 1957; Bud Flanagan (Robert Winstrop), "Crazy Gang" comedian, 1968; Sir John Anthony Quigley, actor, 1989. On this day: the *Sunday Times* was first published, 1822; in Italy, Benito Mussolini, Fascist leader, seized power, 1922; Aristotile Onassis married Jacqueline Kennedy, 1968; the Sydney Opera House was opened to the public, 1973. **TUESDAY** is the Feast Day of St Agatha. St Andrew the Apostle, St Cretus, St Artemius, St Bertilla Boscardin and St Caprasius of Agen.

## Lectures

## TODAY

British Museum: Lorna Oakes, "Aspirin Art", 1.15pm.  
National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "Wise (iv): Ter Brugghen The Concor", 12 noon.

## TOMORROW

The Gallery: Roderick Swanson, "Music and the Grand Tour", 2.30pm.

## Dr Kevin Keohane

A memorial celebration for the life of Dr Kevin Keohane will be held at St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Southwark, on Friday 11 November at 11am. Friends and colleagues will be welcome and those wishing to attend should, if they have not already done so, contact Mrs L.S. Hall, The Nuffield Foundation, 28 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3EG (0171 631 0566).

## Consecrated virgins on the Internet

*faith & reason*

What effect will computers and the Internet have on the Church? Andrew Brown is intrigued and concerned by the possibilities – and the range of theological information online.

I was speaking at recent conference on church communications, which put me in a difficult position, since I could not work out how to heckle myself, and don't know many other ways to interact with authority. The audience were for the most part worried men, whose lives were complicated because hispops wouldn't talk to them, and journalists would, if only to ask for access to their bishops. There were a couple of Catholics, delicately snuggled, for everyone knows that their bishops are so exhausted by their ceaseless conversations with God that they have nothing of interest to say for the secular media. But for the most part, the audience were Anglican priests, worrying about how to do an unusually impossible job, for a change.

One of the things that worried them was the Internet. There is a natural affinity between the clergy and personal computers. Priests are for the most part intelligent, educated, and with small businesses to run: a parish may not make any money, but it needs as much organisation as anything more profitable. They are, also, often, lonely: isolated by their statures, their beliefs, or their education. So they tend to play around a lot on the Internet, once they have discovered it. As a means for informal internal communication, this is fine. I listen in myself on a couple of discussion groups and learn surprising things.

The question is whether the Church can make any more constructive use of the net, and how this will change the churches that do so. Just as priests are in the market for computers because they run small enterprises, so churches may be flattened by the new technology because they are all, even the Church of England, at some level organisations. Every other organisation

having startling consequences. Westcott House, a theological college in Cambridge, runs an e-mail service for enquirers about theology. Students, faculty, and even the bishop have all helped in answer serious enquiries seriously in a way which no other medium could make half as easy. Then there are sites which will find you bible quotations in six different English translations and four foreign languages.

The Roman Catholic church has been particularly good at publishing its documents online. Needing to find out about consecrated virgins in a hurry, I was able to find and read the text of a letter on this improving subject from Pope Pius XII within five minutes of starting a search. Such tightly focused discussions are not to be confused with the insane ramblings of the usenet discussions haunted by illiterate students from around the world. Sturgeon's law, that 99 per cent of everything is crap, undergoes a strange mutation in the multidimensionality of cyberspace, so that not there, 99 per cent of everything is.

All this sounds wonderful. It empowers consumers of religion as it empowers consumers of everything else. It puts them all into a global market. I can order my books from Amazon.com in Seattle. Why should I not order my theology from the Billy Graham Library? The problem is that "consuming" religion is not what the religious are supposed to do. To adapt to your market is to adapt to this world, perhaps fatally.

One last point. It may seem an imposition to devote an entire article to God and the Internet, but at least I got all the way to the end without using the word "gay".



## unit trusts

## UK GROWTH &amp; INCOME

Unit Trust	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	9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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Unichem launches fresh £657m offer for chemists chain as the OFT moves to end price fixing on over-the-counter medicines

## Bid battle for Lloyds resumes

Nigel Cope

The bid battle for Lloyds Chemists sparked into life again yesterday when Unichem renewed its 505.5p per share offer valuing Lloyds at £657m. Unichem made its move moments after the Department of Trade and Industry said it was satisfied with undertakings given by Gehe to make the required disposals of warehouses in the event of a successful takeover.

Gehe, the German pharmaceuticals group, said it was "evaluating" its position but was still interested in Lloyds. Dieter Kammerer, chairman of Gehe's management board said: "We believe that Unichem would face significant risks in acquiring Lloyds Chemists given the relative size of the companies."

Lloyds Chemists board advised its shareholders to "take no action" on Unichem's offer. It said it noted Gehe's continuing interest. Lloyds Chemist shares increased by 17.5p to 521.5p, comfortably above

Unichem's offer price. Unichem shares fell 9p to 249p. The re-opening of the 10 month bid saga was given added significance by the government's move to end price controls on over-the-counter medicines following a long running campaign by Asda. Unichem shrugged off suggestions that the possible end of price fixing would harm its retail business which operates under the Moss Chemists name. It said 88 per cent of its business is prescription medicines which are unaffected by the announcement. Only 3 per cent of its remaining sales are over-the-counter medicines.

Unichem's offer is almost identical to its revised bid which lapsed in March. It is offering 16 new Unichem shares and 92p in cash for every 10 Lloyds Chemist shares held. The difference is that there is no unwritten cash alternative and no special dividend. Unichem already owns 9.9 per cent of Lloyds Chemists.

Gehe still has 21 days to submit a revised offer. Though

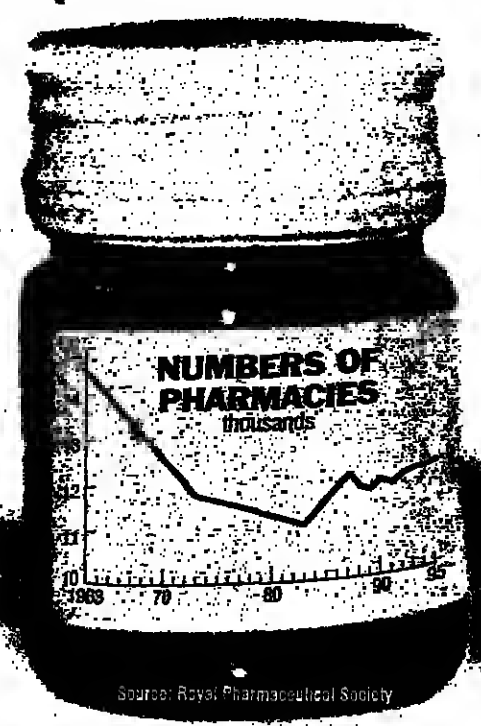
Gehe has said Lloyds is now worth less due to the recent poor trading performance - it announced a 15 per cent profit drop to £47m last week - analysts said Unichem's move may force it to bid higher.

Gehe criticised Unichem's offer saying it ignored the fall in profits. It said the deal would dilute earnings in the first year and that reorganisation costs would be higher than originally forecast.

Justifying the renewed offer, Unichem's chief executive Jeffrey Harris said: "The core business of Lloyds Chemists is as valuable to us as it has ever been. I am confident that we can deliver what we have promised including earnings enhancement after the first year."

The reorganisation costs - estimated at £34m - are largely due to closing Lloyds under-performing drugstore chain. Mr Harris said cost savings would be achieved through increased buying power, rationalisation of the distribution network and reduction of central overheads. These savings would contribute

### HOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHEMIST IS BEING SQUEEZED OUT



### CHEMIST STORE NUMBERS

Store Type	Count
Over 50 stores	
Boots	1226
Lloyds	924
E Moss (Unichem)	461
Hills Pharmacy (Gehe)	357
NCC	225
Tesco	170
Other Co-ops	141
Safeway	89
Asda	84
L Rowland	62
J Sainsbury	56
Superdrug	92
Under 5 stores	7992

Source: Company information, Verdict Analysis

more than £15m towards operating profits in the first year after the takeover and £20m a year after that. Unichem made its original

£650m offer for Lloyds in January. Gehe made a similar offer the following month. Both subsequently raised their offers but they lapsed in March when

they were referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Both sides had to agree to sell seven wholesale warehouses.

## Pharmacies will be the big losers

Nigel Cope

The City yesterday shrugged off news that the Office of Fair Trading is to take steps to end resale price maintenance on over-the-counter medicines, saying the impact on the major pharmacy groups would be limited. Analysts said the end of price fixing would benefit the major pharmacy chains such as Boots, Britain's largest chemist, which would be able to use their economies of scale to cut prices and drive volumes higher.

Supermarkets such as Asda, which led the campaign for cheaper medicines, should also benefit. Asda claimed the OFT decision was a "victory for ordinary working people". It also represents a personal triumph for Archie Norman, Asda's chairman, who started the campaign a year ago. He is now the prospective Conservative candidate for Loughborough.

The real loser of the OFT's decision is expected to be the smaller pharmacies, which are already losing much of their regular toiletries business to the major supermarkets. Manufacturers and wholesalers will also find their margins squeezed. However, it is by no means

certain that the OFT decision will lead to a change in the law. The issue must first be reviewed by the Restrictive Practices Court. The Community Pharmacy Action Group, which represents smaller chemists, is certain to campaign for Government intervention.

Boots shares fell 5.5p to 638.5p on the news while Kingfisher, owner of the Superdrug chain, only fell a penny to 654.5p. Sean Eddie, of NatWest Markets, said the impact on the market was unlikely to be significant. He said that since the collapse of the Net Book Agreement last year, only 4 per cent of books were being discounted. "WH Smith has gained market share in books since the Net Book Agreement collapsed," he said. "Boots should be able to do the same. It is the corner shop, which relies on convenience trade on the high street, that will suffer."

Boots said it was surprised and disappointed by the OFT decision. "We firmly believe that RPM operates in the public interest and that this will be the conclusion of the Restrictive Practices Court in due course," SmithKline Beecham said it was disappointed by the move.

## Virgin to offer low charge pension

Virgin Direct, part of the airline to cola empire owned by Richard Branson, yesterday extended its move into financial services with the launch of a new personal pension which the company claimed was among the cheapest in the market.

The Virgin personal pension, which will be sold over the telephone, will impose a charge of £2 on initial contributions, irrespective of their size. Annual management fees are 1 per cent. Unlike pensions products from other life companies, Virgin said that it will impose no penalties for stopping, changing, restarting, increasing or decreasing contributions.

For monthly contributions of £250 lasting 15 years, the company claimed its charges to new customers would be about 10 per cent over the pension's lifetime, assuming 9 per cent growth a year, equal to Equitable Life.

By contrast, Prudential's charges would cost 14 per cent of a pension's payout and Barclays Life would charge 18 per cent over the same period. Rowan Gormley, managing director of the Virgin Direct insurance business, said the company aimed to force the pensions industry out of its "complacency" with the new product. "The impact will probably be quite disproportionate compared to the volumes we do, because existing products are opaque and charges are too high," he said.

"Now someone has set a standard for simple, straightforward low charges, there will be pressure to stand up to that."

But other companies claimed yesterday that Virgin's product, which invests in the same FTSE All Share tracker fund as its Growth PEP, could miss out of potential gains from world stock markets.

Nigel Emery, pensions marketing director at Save & Prosper, said: "Active management allows fund managers to choose which areas of both UK and world stock markets to invest in. If the UK does less well compared with other parts of the world, this will affect fund performance."



On the blacklist: Pen Kent, as a director of the Commonwealth Development Corporation, may be barred from the US

## Businesses face US ban over Cuba links

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

A total of 27 leading British companies and organisations and their directors face being blacklisted in the United States, under the controversial Helms-Burton Act which gives authorities the power to exclude businesses and individuals from the US if they have done business with Cuba.

The list, obtained by Bryan Cassidy, a Conservative Euro-

MP from the US House of Representatives international relations sub-committee, includes The Body Shop, tobacco group BAT, chemicals giant ICI, shipping firm P&O, Unilever and drug group Glaxo-Wellcome.

He warned yesterday that not only the companies themselves, but directors and their families could be expelled from the United States or barred from entry. Up to 318 European companies could be affected.

One organisation on the list is the Commonwealth Development Corporation, a Government body which manages £1.5bn of investment projects in developing countries. CDC directors include Pen Kent, who is also a director of the Bank of England, and Russell Seal, a main board director of the oil company BP with responsibility for refinery operations.

However Sean Magee, a CDC director, said last night that the organisation, which announced

last year that it planned to pursue projects in Cuba, had not taken any action in the country. He said the CDC's understanding of the Helms-Burton legislation was that those affected had to deal with assets confiscated during the Cuban revolution and at this stage no money had been spent and no directors had travelled to Cuba on business.

"However we are watching developments closely. It could have extremely serious implications for us," Mr Magee said.

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

Britons have been reacquainting themselves with their flexible friends. Thanks to the gathering consumer boom, spending on plastic is growing at a record pace, with much of the increase being splurged on entertainment and hotels.

Credit card spending was £4.1bn last month, up nearly a quarter compared with a year earlier, and debit card spending reached £3.3bn, a 44 per cent rise, according to statistics from the Credit Card Research Group, a trade body for the country's main card issuers. Separate figures published by the high street banks yesterday showed that personal loans, including credit card borrowing, was nearly two-thirds higher last month than a year earlier, at £409m compared with £250m last September.

There is every sign, too, that the spending spree is in its infancy. Household purchasing power adjusted for taxes and inflation is growing at its fastest pace for four years. By next March the flavour of the late 1980s might well have returned, when high earners in the City of London received their bonuses after a bumper year in 1995.

According to the CCRG, one

of the biggest rises in both credit and debit in the year to September was spending on entertainment, which includes restaurants, cinemas, theatres, amusement parks and bowling alleys. Use of credit was up 31 per cent at £314m during the month, and debit spending climbed 60 per cent to £117m.

Other figures showed strong mortgage lending and a surge in broad money growth last month.

If key figures next week, including GDP for the third quarter of the year, are equally strong, the Bank of England will have an impressive arsenal of evidence in favour of higher interest rates. But analysts still expect the Chancellor, who yesterday held his pre-Budget away-day at country house Dorneywood with ministers and officials, to try to leave rates unchanged before the election.

New mortgage lending by the high street banks and building societies was 17 per cent higher than a year earlier in September, at £1.5bn, although both reported a dip during the month. The banks lost market share to the building societies, accounting for only £417m of the total.

Net advances made by the building societies were a remarkable 81 per cent higher than the previous September. A

further signal of the new buoyancy of the housing market was an increase in the number of loans approved to £2,000, nearly a third higher than the same month last year.

"This should ensure that house prices continue to rise over the winter months," said Jonathan Lynnes, an economist at HSBC Markets.

The banks' figures showed that the corporate sector repaid loans in September. This was reflected in a weaker-than-expected economy-wide total for lending, only £3.5bn compared with expectations of a £5bn-plus increase.

Some economists look this as a sign that the recovery is patchy. But Michael Saunders at investment bank Salomons said the drop in corporate borrowing was probably due to the tailing off of takeover activity and the fact that manufacturers were borrowing less in finance excess stocks now these had been run down.

"All of these figures are reasonably buoyant," he said. This buoyancy was mirrored by a 0.8 per cent jump in M4, the broad money measure, taking its 12-month growth rate to 9.8 per cent from 9.5 per cent in August.

The FTSE 100 index closed at a record 4,053.1 yesterday, up 11 points.

## Green signal for Stagecoach rail deal

Michael Harrison

The Government yesterday cleared the way for further mergers in the privatised rail industry by giving the go-ahead for Stagecoach's £25m takeover of the training leasing company, Porterbrook.

Approval for the deal will make millionaires out of many of Porterbrook's 50 staff, led by managing director Sandy Anderson, who will make £36.2m out of his shares in the company.

John Taylor, the corporate and consumer affairs minister, said he had decided not to refer the proposed takeover to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, provided Stagecoach gave legally-binding undertakings to overcome competition concerns.

The undertakings, which will be policed by the Office of Fair Trading, are designed to prevent Stagecoach from using Porterbrook to cross-subsidise its passenger rail franchises

and discriminating against rival train operators.

The Government sold Porterbrook to a management buy-out team backed by Charterhouse Development Capital for £27m only ten months ago.

Approval for the takeover by Stagecoach is now likely to trigger consolidation among other train operating and train leasing companies. Nomura, which bought one of the other two rolling stock leasing companies, Angel Train Contracts,

for £700m has already indicated that it will seek a link-up with a train operator.

The undertakings also require Stagecoach to publish separate accounts for its train operating and rolling stock businesses and to not use information gained from Porterbrook about competitors to help its existing passenger franchises nor to aid it when tendering for further franchises.

Stagecoach already runs South West Trains and the Is-

land Line on the Isle of Wight and has been shortlisted for Merseyrail. It also intends to bid for the seven franchises still to be put out to tender.

Keith Cochrane, Stagecoach's finance director, said the undertakings were broadly in line with those the company had offered itself when it announced the bid for Porterbrook in July.

He said the approval would enable Porterbrook to proceed with a £90m order for 30 new trains for South West Trains.

## Channel 5 to use BT for retuning

Mathew Horsman  
Media Editor

Channel 5, the new terrestrial television service, is poised to announce a deal with BT to cover the retuning of video recorders in Northern Ireland.

The special arrangement, due to be announced next week, would involve BT personnel on an appointments-only basis. The approach was demanded by the RUC which said door-to-door visits by Channel 5's own retuners would be unwelcome in the security-conscious province.

The terms of the agreement have yet to be finalised. The two sides were still negotiating a contract yesterday.

The news emerged as the Independent Television Commission formally confirmed it would accept a delayed launch for Channel 5, which is now likely to be on British television screens by 30 March, rather than 1 January as originally planned.

The delay is linked to teething problems in the retuning of millions of VCRs, made necessary because of likely interference from the Channel 5 signal. And the award of an additional frequency for the

signal has increased the number of sets requiring retuning.

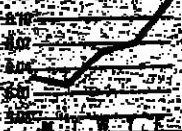


David Elstein, chief executive of the channel, said yesterday that the official start-up date would not be announced for some time. "Why should we say now what our launch date is, and then have our competitors aggressively schedule against us?" he said. He added that the launch was likely to take place on Easter weekend, but said: "Our competitors will have to schedule on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, because they won't know exactly when we launch."

Mr Elstein hinted that there may be delays in starting the service in certain parts of the country, as a result of the retuning schedule. Under the terms of its ITC licence, Channel 5 can only begin broadcasting in a given transmission area once 90 per cent of homes have been retuned.

He added that discussions had begun with BSkyB to secure a satellite transponder for Channel 5, but that no agreement had yet been reached. He said, however, that he expected satellite capacity to be found by the end of this year, well before the expected launch.

STOCK MARKETS				
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High
FTSE 100	4053.1	+11.0		4050.80
FTSE 250	4450.1	+6.0		4568.60
FTSE 350	2014.3	+4.8		2013.30
FTSE SmallCap	12193.7	+1.8		12241.36
FTSE AMShare	11982.94	+7.05		11986.18
New York	6057.77	+8.57		6020.81
Tokyo	21812.30	+188.56		22568.80
Hong Kong	12510.05	+73.36		12480.70
Frankfurt	1718.28	+1.38		2728.45

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*	UK medium gilt	US long bond			
					
* 90 day future rates					
Money Market Rates					
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	
UK	5.88	6.31	7.58	8.18	
US	5.19	5.69	6.49	8.05	
Japan	0.44	0.53	2.81	2.80	
Germany	2.97	3.09	5.98	5.51	
* Bankmark indices					
MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Shares	Price by	Change by	Falls	Price by	
Millennium	353.5	29	3.9	Darko Bus Sys	592.5
Euromet	600	29	4.9	Unilever	249
Seas	91	8	3.4	Chiroscience Grp	372.5

CURRENCIES				
£/\$	£/DM	£/Y	Yesterday	Change
1.5917	1.5715	0.6283	-	0.6588
1.5885	1.5715	0.6285	-	0.6588
2.4551	2.2223	1.5437	+0.6201	1.4141
179.09	159.172	112.180	+0.005	100.650
69.3	+0.3	84.2		

OTHER INDICATORS				
Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Latest
24.42	+0.26	15.79	RPI	153.8
384.25	-0.10	382.00	GDP	108.1
238.90	-0.75	242.38	Base Rates	-5.75pc



## business



JEREMY WARNER

'In waitlist Kim Howells, Labour's competition spokesman, to tell them that the windfall profit tax was an act of spite that he heartily agreed with'

## Why utility reform won't be an issue for Labour

News reaches me of an extraordinary fracas, or rather series of them, that took place this week under the umbrella of that usually restrained and well meaning organisation, the Fabian Society. For obvious reasons, it is fashionable these days, possibly to the point of necessity, for businessmen to attend any event where Labour big wigs are going to be speaking. This particular one was organised by Neil Stewart, a New Labour groupie who now works for that master of commercial PR, Sir Tim Bell.

The conference was held under Chatham House rules, which means that nothing can be reported without permission, but since I was not there, I'm free to recount whatever I like.

Mr Stewart's theme was the well trodden one of utilities, regulation and windfall profit taxes. The main disappointment came when Mike O'Brien, Labour's shadow financial secretary, billed as there to give a keynote address on Labour's plans for a windfall profit tax, refused to say anything about it at all. Much too sensitive, problematic and contentious for your ears, seemed, to his audience of utility types, to be his general demeanour. It was already money back time, but there was worse.

In waitlist Kim Howells, Labour's competition spokesman, to tell them that the windfall profit tax was an act of spite that he heartily agreed with. It is Labour's political duty to be nasty to the utilities whether

it is justified or not, he said. It was therefore completely pointless trying to argue against it. He really couldn't give a damn whether it was right or wrong, it was going to happen anyway. Was he drunk or merely taking the piss? Which ever it was, there followed a heated exchange of views.

I recite this episode not just for its amusement value, but also because it tells a story. Everyone knows there is something wrong about our privatised utilities and the way they are regulated, but it is hard to articulate precisely what those things are or what to do about them. In many respects, Labour is worse at it even than the present Government, whose position, at least, has the merit of being unambiguous.

Broadly, ministers believe reform unnecessary. Warts and all, the system works reasonably well and much as it was supposed to, they say. Instead they vainly try to drive home the message that utility privatisation, far from being something to be ashamed of, is one of the great triumphs and achievements of 17 years of Tory rule, having led to enormous improvements in efficiency and standards of service across a great range of industries. The trouble for New Labour is that though they might rail against fat cat salaries, "excessive" profits, dividend and questionable standards of service, in their hearts, most of them know this to be true.

The question becomes, therefore, not one of how to put all these initiatives into reverse, but merely that of how to tweak and reform the system so as to answer the electorate's concerns. In this department, solutions are hard to find. For all the noise, heat and political point scoring generated by fat cat salaries, the utilities are actually only part of a much wider pattern of corporate excess in Britain today. There were some particularly indefensible cases of it in the early years of water and electricity privatisation, but nowadays it is no worse among the utilities than anywhere else.

There doesn't seem a lot of point, therefore, in attacking fat cat salaries in the utilities if you are not going to confront it elsewhere as well, for the effect would be only to drive the best managers out of the industry. As for the more general problem of corporate excess, there are no easy answers here either, as the impotence of Greenbury has demonstrated. The only guaranteed method, penal rates of taxation for very high earners, has been all but ruled out by Tony Blair.

So Labour is stuck with its windfall profit tax as its only way of getting back at the fat cats. It would be naive of the utilities to believe they are going to change Labour's mind on this. Apart from anything else, this is for the time being Labour's only substantial tax proposal, the only way it has yet come up with of adding to Government revenues.

In other respects, however, Labour has yet to define a credible policy for the utilities. There are ideas aplenty but none of them, when examined closely, really seem to fit the bill. Profit sharing between customers and shareholders has a superficial appeal, but when you think about it, this is actually just a complicated version of the present system of price cap regulation, whereby customers gain the benefits of efficiency gains at each periodic price review. Moreover, because it reduces the incentive for efficiency, customers might end up worse off.

A rather better approach might be sliding scale regulation, which matches any increase in dividends with an equal reduction in charges. Again, however, the incentive to efficiency that the present system gives is removed and, in any case, the degree of legislative, regulatory, and organisational reform required probably makes it not worth the candle.

The upshot is that Labour is left creeping slowly but surely back to the Tory position - that the present regulatory setup is basically all right. This is the more so because with each successive price review it becomes progressively harder to sustain the charge of profiteering. With British Gas, we have now gone full circle; here the allegation is not that regulation is too lax but that it has become unacceptably harsh. The same will eventually happen with water and

electricity. The utilities may have been privatised with too lax a regulatory regime, but by the time Labour gets into power, the system may largely have corrected itself. As a consequence the utilities may no longer be much of an issue. Their frenzy of unrestrained greed will have helped Labour get into government, but they will no longer be a problem that needs to be dealt with.

That last great bastion of retail price maintenance, over-the-counter medicines, has fallen, or it will do if John Bridgeman, director-general of fair trading has his way. Normally I would stand full square behind Mr Bridgeman on an issue like this, but in this instance I don't. Retail price maintenance in OTC medicines supports a vital network of small local pharmacies throughout Britain. Mr Bridgeman's insistence that it will have little effect on them is fatuous and dangerous nonsense. By allowing himself to fall prey to Archie Norman's charm offensive, Mr Bridgeman threatens the future of hundreds of these enterprises. He might find it more convenient to satisfy his pharmacy needs at the nearest Asda, but he seems to forget that some people don't even have a car. Let alone a chauffeur. What does he care? It won't be Mr Bridgeman that has to answer for this act of vandalism and wrecklessness. Someone else will be doing his job by then.

## Hampel questions boardroom pay rules

Michael Harrison

The Hampel Committee on corporate governance is examining whether rules on boardroom pay and long-term incentive plans need to be tightened up in the wake of renewed controversy over executive remuneration.

The committee, chaired by Sir Ronnie Hampel, chairman of ICI, yesterday wrote to organisations representing business, shareholder and consumer interests, asking whether the guidelines concerning performance-related bonus schemes needed "refinement".

The letter also canvasses opinion on whether shareholders should have to vote to approve directors' pay packages at annual meetings and whether the Greenbury Committee's recommendation that directors' contracts be limited to one year strikes the correct balance.

This is the first time the Hampel committee has spelt out the areas it is examining since it was set up last November to review the workings of the Cadbury Code on corporate governance and recommend any changes and additions that might be necessary.

Other areas the committee has decided to concentrate on are the role of executive and non-executive directors and ways in which the relationships between owners and managers can be strengthened.

In particular, the committee asks for views on whether unitary boards consisting of roughly equal numbers of executive and non-executive directors is the most appropriate structure for UK quoted companies.

The letter also asks whether there needs to be a division of responsibility between chairman and chief executive - one of the key recommendations of Cadbury - or whether it is enough to prescribe a sufficient degree of independence on company boards through non-executive directors.

Another area being studied is the role of shareholders, particularly institutional investors, and whether they should exercise their ownership rights more actively by, for instance, voting on all resolutions at AGMs and concerning themselves with broader issues such as social, environmental and ethical matters.

The letter, from the committee secretary, John Healey, asks for responses by 31 De-



Ronnie Hampel: Asks whether shareholders should vote to approve directors' pay

cember. The committee has been asked to report by the end of 1997, although it aims to issue a draft report around the middle of next year.

Christopher Haskins, the chairman of Northern Foods and a member of the Hampel committee, will address the

Confederation of British Industry's annual conference in Harrogate next month on corporate governance. The CBI is due to publish a report in the next fortnight strongly backing the concept of unitary boards and rejecting the two-tier boards favoured on the Continent.

The committee is also asking interested parties such as the Association of British Insurers, whether, in reviewing the existing Cadbury code and deciding what needs deleting or adding, it should differentiate between companies by size and type of business.

## Football chiefs to decide on Wembley's future

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

The future of Wembley, operator of the world-famous but shabby sports stadium, hangs in the balance this weekend with a decision on the location of a new national stadium expected to be effectively decided early next week. Shares in the company closed 8.5p lower last night at 395p, ahead of the decision, but they have risen sharply in recent days as the market became more convinced that the stadium will stay in the capital.

A decision by the footballing authorities, the Premier League and Football Association, is expected to be delivered to the Sports Council on Monday or Tuesday detailing their preferred location. Wembley faces a challenge from Manchester City Council which wants to move the stadium to the North, but it is thought increasingly

unlikely to pose a serious threat. The Sports Council has until the end of the year to make up its mind, although it is understood that it will probably ratify whatever decision "Football" recommends. Once it has decided on the site, detailed costings will be drawn up during the first half of next year before a formal application is made to the Sports Lottery Board for a grant.

About two thirds of the cost of building the new stadium, estimated at between £130m and £170m, is expected to come from Lottery funds.

One of the factors acting in Wembley's favour is likely to be its dramatic recent return to financial health. After a successful Euro 96 football tournament, the company, which also owns greyhound tracks in America, reversed a £5.5m pre-tax loss into a £7.7m profit in the six months to June. The Wembley complex itself reported more than

doubled operating profits of £7.9m during the period.

Wembley said yesterday that, with a decision from the Sports Council not expected before the end of the year, it was too early to assess the financial implications of winning the stadium bid. Analysts have become increasingly enthusiastic about the company's prospects, however, with one broker putting a value of 520p on the shares.

If Wembley gets the nod, it will have the opportunity to put in place an ambitious scheme to transform the stadium, including rotating the ground through 90 degrees to solve current problems for television coverage in bright, early evening sun, and the use of the stadium's twin towers to create a grandiose entrance.

Designed by Sir Norman Foster, the radical plans also include a retractable roof and giant video screens to relay events inside to crowds outside.

## Atlantic taps into UK phones

Competition for telephone customers promised to intensify yesterday with the announcement that the second company to use wireless technology to connect homes to the fixed-phone network planned to launch a service at the end of the month, writes Chris Godsmark.

Atlantic Telecom will offer phone services initially to about 20 per cent of addresses in Glasgow, including around 100,000 homes in competition with BT and cable operator International Cable Ltd. The company also revealed it had raised £23.2m in a rights issue to fund the further roll-out of the system to the rest of the city by 1998.

Graham Duncan, Atlantic's chairman, said prices for the service would not be unveiled until the official launch on 30 October, but innovations would include a variety of billing options with bundles of calls included in the price. Bundled tariffs were pioneered by Orange, the mobile phone group.

The first fixed-link radio telephone firm, Ionica, began services in East Anglia earlier this year.

### IN BRIEF

• US imports from China reached a new record in August because of a surge in imports of toys and Christmas decorations. The gap reached \$4.7bn (£2.96bn), up from \$3.8bn in July. It is expected to fall again when stores have finished stocking up for the holiday season. However, a much better US trade position with Europe and Japan, in the main due to stronger exports of aircraft and computers, helped the total gap shrink 6.6 per cent during the month to \$10.83bn.

• Jeremy Bartholomew-White, managing director of Scandax Capital Management, gave an undertaking in the High Court yesterday to liquidate the foreign exchange trading schemes his firm operated in this country. The court action to stop him trading was brought by the Securities and Investments Board. Investors in trading schemes run by Scandax, which is based in Copenhagen, have lost more than £1m of the £1.28m they have put in.

• The Office of Fair Trading is considering whether to refer the proposed acquisition by National Transcommunications of the British Broadcasting Corporation's transmission network to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission. Submissions to the OFT should be made by 1 November.

• Magnum Power has conditionally placed 18 million shares at 20p each to raise £3.6m. The new shares will constitute 28.3 per cent of the company's enlarged ordinary share capital and the firm has applied to the Stock Exchange for the ordinary shares to be admitted for trading on the AIM.

• Ian Lang, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has decided not to refer the proposed acquisition by Scottish Television of Caledonian Publishing to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973.

• On 8 October we stated that "the television rights to Paddington Bear" were being sold by Caspian. We are now informed by Paddington & Co that the worldwide TV rights to the character belong to them and the only rights being sold by Caspian are to a 56-episode puppet animation series and four separate television specials made in the 1970s by FilmFair, now a Caspian subsidiary. We are happy to have the opportunity to make the position clear.

## Top City brokers to merge in £54m deal

Jill Treanor  
Banking Correspondent

Gerrard & National and King & Shaxson, which have seen their traditional discount house operations virtually consigned to the history books by a change of policy at the Bank of England, are merging in a £53.7m deal.

The two companies hope that the merger will lead to more opportunities in stockbroking and fund management, and said that the deal would also release £25m of capital for investment and future acquisitions.

The combined group will have the largest private client stockbroking business in the UK, bringing together two well known City broking firms - Gerrard Vivian Gray and Greig Middleton. The combined brokerage will trade as Greig Middleton.

Some cost savings will be made by making up to 100 staff redundant from the new Gerrard Group's money broking and back office operations. After the job cuts, the company will employ more than 900 people in its stockbroking arm.

420 in its derivatives broking operations and 30 on the money market side.

"It's a strategic move. The business of Greig Middleton fits very well with the business of Gerrard Vivian Gray. They are both on same back office system and know each other very well. There's a common culture," said Mike Davies, chief executive of Gerrard & National.

The firms' discount house, or money market operations, will be merged and renamed Gerrard and King and this, in combination with the integration on

the stock brokers' back offices will achieve annualised cost savings of £5m.

Gerrard & National's derivatives broker GNL, the largest firm on the floor of Liffe, will retain its identity and Mr Davies ruled out job losses despite slim profit margins in futures trading.

The terms of the merger comprises 17 Gerrard & National ordinary shares for 25 King & Shaxson shares. The deal will give Gerrard & National shareholders a 62.7 per cent stake in the merged business and King & Shaxson's investors a 37.3 per

cent shareholding.

The merger accompanied Gerrard & National's interim results, which stunned analysts by showing pre-tax profits had slumped from £12.1m to £6.3m. Shares in Gerrard & National fell to low for the year of 277p, down 27p. King & Shaxson's shares, however, hit a new high with a 20p rise to 182.5p.

We've got more time for you

IBERIA

7.55pm MADRID Iberia: Last back to Heathrow

7.30am HEATHROW Iberia: First to Madrid



من الأصل



DATA BANK

FTSE 100  
4053.1 +11.0  
FTSE 250  
4450.1 +6.0  
FTSE 350  
2014.3 +4.8  
SEAQ VOLUME  
682m shares,  
40,303 bargains  
Gilt Index  
174

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

Blue chips managed to achieve another peak, even though many in the stock market pondered the happenings of nine years ago when equities suffered their most traumatic slump. There had been fears that echoes of the 1987 crash would worry investors, prompting the market to lose its autumnal glow. Although failing to hold best levels, Footsie ended 11 points higher at 4,053.1, a mere 2.3 above the previous record, hit on Tuesday. Supporting shares have, however, failed to enjoy the fun which has pushed Footsie to 10 autumn peaks. The MidCap index, with 250 constituents, is still more than 100 points from its high, despite a 6 points gain to 4,450.1. Its best level is 4,568.5. Government stocks were unsettled by Treasury adviser Tim Congdon's call for a 1 per cent point interest rate increase.

# Shadow of 1987 hangs over blue chips' continued climb

TAKING STOCK

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

A little takeover action helped lift shares. UniChem's resumption of hostilities over Lloyds Chemists and a merger in the once arcane world of discount houses helped sentiment. Lloyds quickly rose above the UniChem offer gaining 17p to 521.5p on expectations Gehe, the German group, will mount a counter strike. Gerard & National, with a £53.7m offer for King & Shaxson, fell 27p to 272p, with an interim profits slump doing much of the damage. K&S gained 20p to 182.5p. The deal signals a stockbroking get-together; K&S own Greig Middleton and G&N embrace Gerard Vivian Gray. The two stockbrokers will merge, forming what is claimed to be the leading private client broking house.

Boots, off 5.5p at 638p was unsettled by the proposed ending of resale price maintenance on over the counter medicines. But Asda, the supermarket chain which has been campaigning for price fixing to be abandoned, added 1p to 114.5p. Safeway gained 6.5p to 362.5p and Tesco 5p to 332.5p. Pearson rebounded 20p to 696.5p on second thoughts about its boardroom changes and British Aerospace enjoyed an SRS Warburg lift, climbing 23.5p to 1,163.5p.

Brewers continued to draw strength from the Accounting Standards Board's proposals over property depreciation. Bass ended 4.5p higher at 799.5p and Whitbread, which is rumoured to be the front runner for the unquoted BrightReasons restaurants chain, 8p to 726p. BrightReasons, put up for sale by its venture capitalist backers, could cost around £80m.

Eurotherm, the electronic equipment group hit in the summer by an onerous boardroom upheaval, brightened 28p to 600p as ABN Amro Hoare Govett said the shares were a buy but Johnson Matthey, the metals group, fell 11.5p to 611p with UBS cutting its profit forecasts by £9m to £110m and £12m to £124m.

TI Group shaded to 561.5p as its £189m bid for the Swedish polymer engineer, Forseda, ran into flak from the Henderson fund management group which has 13 per cent

100p, promptly falling to 91p. Worries about the next set of profits from Pilkington, the glass group, again haunted the shares, off 3.5p to 174p. Verity, with its Far Eastern shareholder Wo Kee Hong, continuing to sell, gained a further 1.5p to 34p. It is widely believed that Wo Kee Hong, which once had a significant stake, has virtually completed its sale programme.

HTV, the television group, attracted attention ahead of the signalled industry restructuring, gaining 8.5p to 386.5p. BSKB moved remorselessly towards the 700p barrier, improving 17.5p to 691p. Merrill Lynch support remained the spur for VideoLogic, up 1.5p to 62.5p, a 13p gain this week.

Tottenham Hotspur scored a 27.5p gain to a 520p peak and Conrad, said to be near to completing a deal with one of the unquoted Premiership clubs, put on 0.5p to 6.75p.

JA sudden fizz in the shares of JN Nichols, the soft drink group best known for its Vimto brand, has prompted talk of possible takeover action with one of the big brewers, presumably Bass, regarded as the most likely predator. The shares had been quiet with recent profit growth unexciting. But they jumped 12p to 224.5; there were suggestions of unsatisfied buying orders. Profits last year were £9.6m with forecasts for this year hovering around £10.2m.

The restructuring at Castle Mill International, the hard pressed textile group, has gone well and there is talk of demand for shares exceeding supply. One buyer is apparently seeking a 10 per cent stake. CML, an ideal shell, has said it will make acquisitions. The shares held at 3.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The provisions (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings, per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: W Exchanges Ex-dividend on Ex all UK Securities Market a Suspended 1p Fully Paid on Nil Paid Shares. 2 AM Stock Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Seag, Simply dial 0800 123 330, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below. For assistance, call our helpline 0171 673 4375 (9.30am - 5.30pm). Cells cost 30p per minute (cheap rate), and 40p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

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High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100

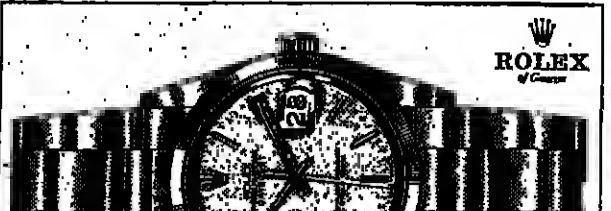
High	Low	Open	Close	Change	Volume	Price	Change	Volume
100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100
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100	99.5	100	99.5	-0.5	100	100	-0.5	100



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## sport

## Braving a trip to the Yankee zoo

SPORT IN AMERICA 1

**Rupert Cornwell** looks at the importance of home advantage for baseball's World Series, which begins in New York tonight

Technically, its name is Yankee Stadium. Those of a nostalgic bent talk about The House That Ruth Built, in reverence of the greatest star the New York Yankees and baseball have ever produced. Those who know, however, refer to the place simply as the Bronx Zoo, where in may be found the toughest, brashiest crowd in America from what likes to think of itself as the toughest, brashiest town in America.

Welcome to New York, where a 12-year-old kid leans into the field to steal an illegal home run for the Yankees at a crucial juncture in the American League Championship Series this month but, instead of being summarily ejected from the stadium, briefly becomes the Big Apple's highest hero since Babe Ruth.

Beyond all argument, however, the stadium is baseball's La Scala, stage for the most legend-encrusted franchise in the sport. Between 1921 and 1981, the Yankees appeared 34 times in the World Series, the ultimate showcase of the sport, winning 22 of them. For decades, Yankee baseball in October was a fixture to rank with the changing of the autumn leaves. Now, after an absence of 15 years, the longest in the club's history, the Yankees are back. Shortly after 8pm local time tonight, the first game of the 1996 Series will begin.

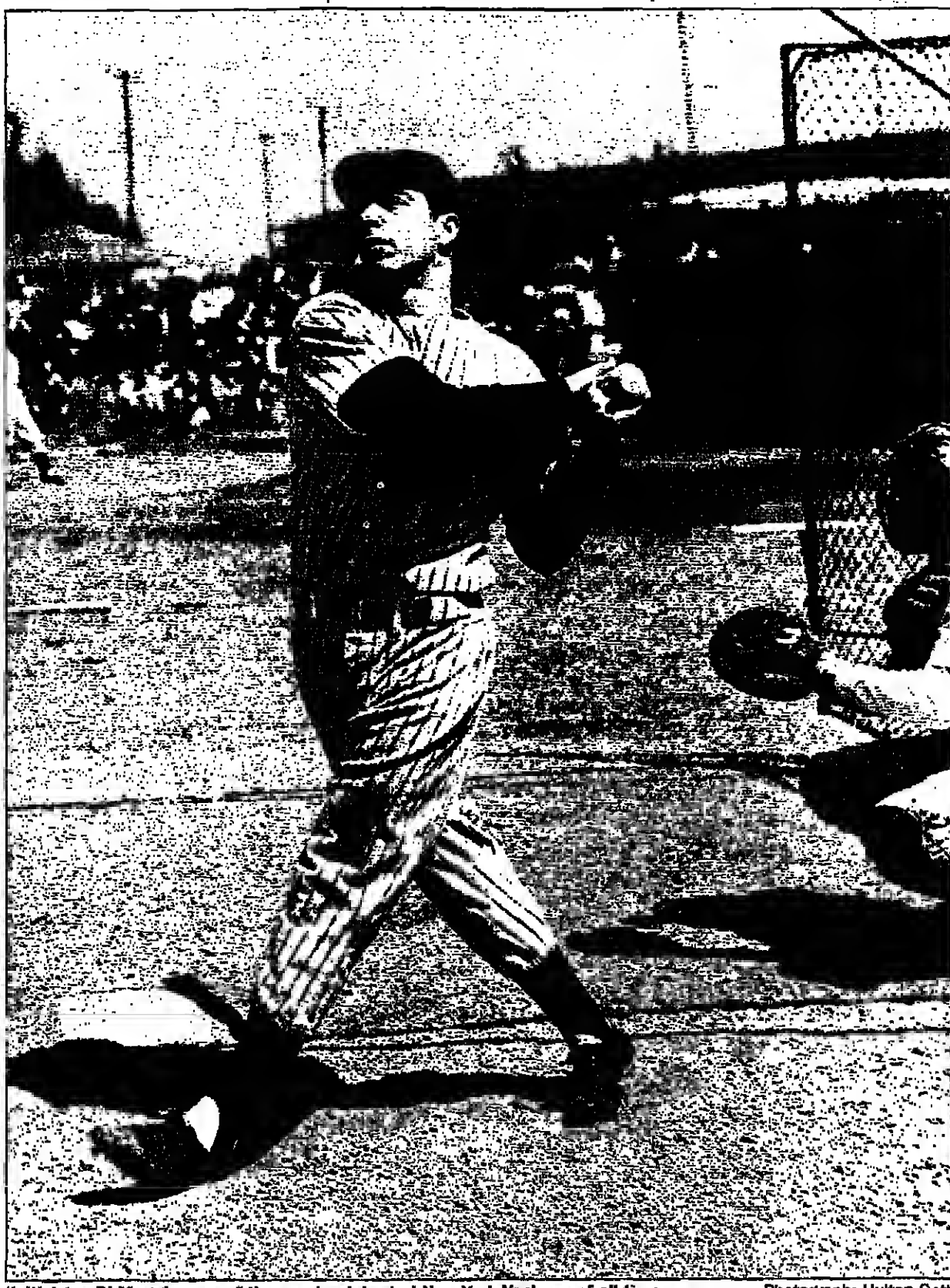
Nowhere has seen more post-season heroics, from the strutting home runs of Babe Ruth and Joe Di Maggio to the savage power of Mickey Mantle, and the perfect game thrown by Don Larsen in 1956, the only one ever in the World Series. Beyond their city's five boroughs, the team may be detested (not for nothing was the film called *Damn Yankees*) but, over the next week, the entire country will be enthralled, if only at the prospect of them losing.

And lose they will. Their opponents in the Series will be the Atlanta Braves, who on Thursday night completed the most crushing comeback victory in National League Championship history. Down three games to one in the best-of-seven series with the St Louis Cardinals, the Braves swept the final three games by a combined 32-1 margin. The 15-0 blow-out which wrapped up matters on Thursday was not just the highest win ever in the NLCS, but an embarrassment to watch. By any yardstick, the Braves must be counted favourites.

This time the Yankees have no megastars, but a quite characteristic harmony in the dressing-room. Much of that is due to their manager, Joe Torre, one of the most beloved figures in the game, who is contesting a world championship for the first time after no less than 32 years and 4,272 games as player and successively manager for the cross-town Mets, the Braves and Cardinals.

No major leaguer in baseball history has ever waited as long. Just 12 months ago, St Louis sacked him. Since then, Torre has lost one brother, Rocco, to a heart attack and watches as another sibling, Frank, fights for his life in a New York hospital. But amid this family anguish, Joe has at last reached the pinnacle.

Then there is the soap opera of Darryl Strawberry. Four months ago, "Straw" was a washed-up prodigy going through the motions in Minnesota for the St Paul Saints of the nondescript Northern League, seemingly the death throes of a massive talent sacrificed not to the all too familiar altar of alcohol, women and cocaine. The Yankees gave him a last chance, and three Strawberry homers in the American League play-offs helped sink Baltimore, beating the Orioles at their own slugging game.



'Joltin' Joe Di Maggio, one of the most celebrated New York Yankees of all time

Photograph: Hulton Getty

The very presence of the Yankees guarantees high drama, be it Bronx *bragadocio* in victory, or a tabloid mauling if they lose. But in purely sporting terms, the 1996 Series could be the best.

With the mid-season acquisition of Strawberry and the mighty Cecil Fielder, formerly of the Detroit Tigers, the club has acquired power to go with

its polished defence. New York has the best pitching in the American League and, in their outfielder Bernie Williams and rookie shortstop Derek Jeter, two of the most exciting young talents in the game. But if any National League club matches the Yankees' of yesterday in its defence and arrogance, it is the defending world champions, the Braves.

Since 1991, only once have they failed to reach the World Series. The media magnate Ted Turner is the most famous owner in the game. More pertinently, the Braves have the best pitching in baseball, built around the starting trio of John Smoltz, Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine, and the 98mph fastballs of closer Mark Wohlers.

To win, the modern heirs of Ruth, Di Maggio and Mantle can afford no mistakes. But they have two points in their favour. One is that they have five days of rest for the tired pitchers to regain their strength (against just one for the Braves). The other is that four of the seven games will be played in front of the frenzied denizens of the Bronx Zoo.

## Soccer secures a new home

SPORT IN AMERICA 2

On the eve of the inaugural MLS final, **John Carlin** reports how the nation's children finally have idols of their own

The rest of the world has been wondering with a mixture of hope, scepticism and trepidation whether soccer is ever going to take hold in the United States.

The answer is finally in. It has. Not necessarily because of the surprising success of the six-month-old professional soccer league, the climax of which will come tomorrow when Washington DC United and Los Angeles Galaxy play the final game of the season to decide the winner of the Major League Soccer championship.

Not necessarily either because, with less than three weeks to go to the American election, the question consuming much of Washington is not whether Bill Clinton or Bob Dole will be president, but whether United will bring the MLS trophy home.

The principal, overwhelming reason why soccer is categorically in the US is that it has supplanted American football, baseball and basketball as American schoolchildren's favourite pastime. Just about every child under the age of 12 is playing soccer. Go to any American town on a Saturday morning - from New York to California, from Idaho to South Carolina - and you will see parks full of little kids, boys and girls, chasing after balls like swarms of bees.

The sport has even given rise to a new term in the American political lexicon: "the Soccer Mom". Candidates of all parties talk earnestly these days about the need to secure "the Soccer Mom vote", by which they mean their desire to win the electoral affections of the average middle-class mother, a person whose life is increasingly dominated by the imperative to transport little Billy or little Sarah - or more likely both - to "soccer practice" during the week and soccer matches on weekends.

Two weeks ago the grey, august *Wall Street Journal* had a story on the front page headlined "Election game plans make 'Soccer Moms' a political force". The catchphrase has been around for six months at most, having originated - according to one version - in a television commercial. The mere fact that the shrewd readers of American trends in Madison Avenue have identified soccer images as instruments of commercial success offers the most compelling evidence to date that the sport has been absorbed into the American culture.

A stroll one afternoon last week in a park in the leafy suburbs of Washington offered evidence of a more endearing kind. It was a small park, barely the size of a full-sized soccer pitch, but there were three separate little groups of children chasing footballs. Despite the best efforts of the coaches, thirty-something ladies in shorts who kept up a continual patter of instructions from the sidelines, they could not be persuaded to fan out and create some space for themselves. "Go, go, go, Damian," one mom cried. "No, no, Rose, the OTHER way. You're shooting against your own team," wailed another.

Cindy Jaffe, a mother of three, was one of the coaches. She was preparing her team, the Grizzlies, for a match this weekend against the Tigers. When the session was over and the kids had run off to meet their waiting moms, she described how soccer had taken over the life of the average American mother. "You spend your time transporting children back and forth. During the week, depending on how many kids you have, you're taking them to practices. At the weekends you only have time for two things: shopping and soccer. You take them to the games, you stand on the sidelines - moms and dads - and you cheer. If your kid is a good player, and plays in a team that travels, your whole life is taken up with soccer."

One of her duties as a coach, she believes, is to encourage the children to watch MLS. "I tell them to watch the games and I've told everybody to pick out a player and follow him through the season. On Sunday, we'll all be watching."

"It's incredibly exciting that DC United's done so well in this first season. When I watch them, I get really carried away."

MLS crowd averages of over 18,000 have exceeded official expectations by 50 per cent. More to the point, as ultimately success will depend on television income, ESPN and the Spanish-language channel, Univision, have declared themselves delighted with their ratings. In a major vote of commercial confidence, the final will be carried live on ABC, one of the four major national networks.

What MLS also provides is the possibility of building a bridge for American children that will enable them to carry their devotion for soccer into adulthood. Children have been playing soccer at school for 15 years, although never in as many numbers as now. But once they reached their teens, lacking role models in the grown-up game, they transferred their allegiances to the traditional American sports.

Now, when children play in the park, they can do something they have never been able to do before but children in the rest of the world have been doing for 100 years. Run down the wing with the ball shouting out the name of their favourite player. "Here comes John Harkes" or "Here comes Cobi Jones."

Harkes and Jones, two members of the US team, are on opposing sides tomorrow, playing for United and Galaxy respectively. The real stars on both teams are not Americans, however. Bolivia's Marco Etcheverry is the pedigree player for United, Galaxy's Eduardo Hurtado - a 6ft 3in Ecuadorian striker known as "the Tank" - is a prolific goalscorer who combines the traditional Latin American touch with the intimidating presence of a Joe Jordan.

Younger native-born players - white, black, Hispanic - are coming through and when the children in the suburban parks begin to reach maturity, the rest of the world had better brace itself. Come the 21st century, America could be dominating world soccer till kingdom come.

## The game has even given rise to a new term in the American political lexicon: the Soccer Mom

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## WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

## TODAY

## Football

Matches not on radio coupons:  
3.0 United States

## NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCE

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## AFL

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## NBA

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## NFL

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## NHL

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Other sports

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Tomorrow

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Football

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Rugby League

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Rugby Union

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Hockey

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Baseball

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
Baltimore v Cleveland  
Buffalo v Pittsburgh  
Dallas v Houston  
Denver v Kansas City  
Detroit v Chicago  
Green Bay v Minnesota  
Indianapolis v Cincinnati  
Jacksonville v Tampa Bay  
Los Angeles v Oakland  
Miami v New England  
New York Jets v New York Giants  
San Francisco v Seattle  
Tennessee v Houston  
Washington Redskins v Dallas

## Ice Hockey

Atlanta v Philadelphia  
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## Speedway











# Improving Timarida is Champion value

**Greg Wood says today's big race at Newmarket is more than just a match**

It is seven months since the Flat season on turf crept slowly into life, and almost 4,000 races have been won and lost since, but for two of the sport's most successful protagonists, two minutes at Newmarket this afternoon are suddenly all that matters. For some weeks it has seemed likely that the Champion Stakes will decide whether Henry Cecil or Saeed bin Suroor (for which read Sheikh Mohammed) will be the champion trainer of 1996. Now the moment has arrived, and the sub-plot elevates an already fascinating contest into perhaps the most compelling of the season.

Bosra Sham or Halling, Pat Eddery or Frankie Dettori, Cecil or Mohammed? For many punters, it will be a choice of the heart rather than the head, with their betting slip the equivalent of a ballot paper. The choice of the people, no doubt, will be Cecil, thanks to long-standing affection mixed with a dash of insularity.

The more thoughtful, however, may prefer the Sheikh's Godolphin team, outnumbered by horses to 40 but representing the most significant innovation in training for many years. It is also worth noting that Godolphin's level stakes profit on its 39 winners is nearly 40 points. Cecil, for so long the punter's friend, is running a 20-point loss.

Both Halling and Bosra Sham go into today's race at the top of their form, though the latter's delicate feet were a cause for concern yesterday morning. Cecil believes his filly has improved significantly since finishing second to Mark Of Esteem in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot, and she allegedly finished one recent gallop on the heels of the group in front of her. The first question for punters is whether this improvement will be enough to take her past Halling, unbeaten in his last eight races on turf.

The second is whether either runner will represent value, given that the market may reflect the attention focused on their trainers. Certainly, this is not a two-horse race, with three other Group One winners in a field which is completed by Even Top, head of a short-head in the 2,000 Guineas.

First Island, it is true, should not beat either of the top leaders, according to the form book, while Even Top has had an interrupted season since Newmarket. But Timarida, whose recent record shows three Group One victories in three different countries in the space of a month, must be a formidable opponent. As pointed out earlier this week, Glory Of Dancer is by no means the hopeless case that 40-1 quotes might imply, though an such-way proposition he is less interesting now the field has reduced to six runners. The value of this morning's match is Timarida (4.15) at around 6-1.

The shape of the Cesarewitch Handicap, the day's principal betting event, is surprisingly similar, with two horses dominating the market. The difference, of course, is that there are 24 alternatives, and neither Jyush or Canon Can has the form to justify early quotes of around 7-2. Both may drift on course, where the bookies have no ante-post liabilities, but it will be surprising if either reaches the 6-1 or so which would represent the in-case of Jyush - a fair bet.

As always, there are several runners which appear to have been laid out for today's race, with Orchestra Stall and Candle Smile the most encouraging candidates. The former is also a little short in the betting, but CANDLE SMILE (nap 3.00) is an excellent each-way option.

The Bontick Stakes gives Bransford Abbey the chance to increase his career record to 24 wins, but while she will get the lengths she needs, so too will Willoughby Flower (post best 4.45), who has improved throughout the year and should now be ready to step up from handicaps. Those she leaves behind - 23 of them, to be precise - line up for a sprint handicap at 3.35 which all wise punters will avoid.



HYPERION'S TV TIPS

**4.15: HALLING**, one of the best British racehorses of the Nineties, has won the Group One Cesarewitch Handicap at Sandown and York both this year and last, can land a fifth Group One victory in races open to three-year-olds and upwards. He is unbeaten in his last eight races, and may have more to fear from Bosra Sham, 1 1/4 lengths behind him in the Cesarewitch Handicap at Sandown. He is unbeaten in his last eight races, and may have more to fear from Bosra Sham, 1 1/4 lengths behind him in the Cesarewitch Handicap at Sandown. He is unbeaten in his last eight races, and may have more to fear from Bosra Sham, 1 1/4 lengths behind him in the Cesarewitch Handicap at Sandown.

**4.45: EASY OPTION**, three lengths fourth to Mark Of Esteem in the Group One Queen Elizabeth II Stakes over a mile at Ascot last time but improved at this longer distance.

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In Command (right) holds Musical Pursuit in a driving finish to the Dewhurst Stakes yesterday. Photograph: Peter Jay

## In Command, but not in Classic picture

The distinguished history of the Dewhurst Stakes seems unlikely to be significantly embellished by the 1996 renewal, won yesterday by Barry Hills' In Command, writes Greg Wood.

The son of Sadler's Wells only narrowly lived up to his name, and with less than half a length covering the first three, the form appears sub-standard for what is traditionally the British season's premier juvenile event.

In Command does not lack determination, however, and he did well to hold the challenges of Musical Pursuit and Air Express after hitting the front a furlong from home.

"The extra furlong and the cut in the ground have made all the difference," Michael Hills, his jockey, said. "He was getting a little tired close home and losing it a bit, but he will be much stouter next season. Very few of Sadler's Wells' offspring win Group One two-year-old races so he must be a bit special."

Bookmakers were less convinced, and In Command is 20-1 for the 1997 2,000 Guineas. William Hills' 4-1 favourite for the first colts' Classic is Bahareh, who beat In Command at Doncaster. The firm then bets 11-1 on Sadler's Wells' offspring, 16-1 on Bontick Stakes winner, Putra, 20-1 others.

### NEWMARKET

**1.45 Hawkey Hill**  
**2.20 Danetime**  
**3.00 Canon Can (nap)**  
**3.35 Bolshoi**

**GOING: Good.** STALLS: 1m 6c. Par ade; remainder, centre.  
HYPERION (nap) 3.00. Par ade; remainder, centre.  
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**LEADING TRAINERS WITH WINNERS:** H. Cecil - 60 winners from 280 runners gives a success rate of 21.4% and a loss to a 1/2 level stake of \$202. H. Cecil - 60 winners from 280 runners gives a success rate of 21.4% and a loss to a 1/2 level stake of \$202. H. Cecil - 60 winners from 280 runners gives a success rate of 21.4% and a loss to a 1/2 level stake of \$202.

**WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN DAYS:** Hyperion (1.45) won at Ascot on Saturday; Bransford Abbey (4.15) won in the Dewhurst Stakes at Newmarket on Friday; Hyperion (1.45) won at Ascot on Saturday; Bransford Abbey (4.15) won in the Dewhurst Stakes at Newmarket on Friday.

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# Nothing but the Premiership for nine-year-olds

Olivia Blair



ON SATURDAY

Ruth doesn't dare mention the Robins: "It's too embarrassing, so I talk about Man Utd," she says. Mark, meanwhile, has abandoned Swindon for QPR: "About a quarter of my friends support Man Utd, a fifth of them are QPR. They're always telling me Swindon are rubbish." In other words, if you're a nine-year-old in a playground in

south-west London and you support a Nationwide League team, you are hounded and forced to go in goal.

As if that wasn't enough of a problem, the cost of taking kids to football is prohibitive to those kids forming a life-long allegiance with their local side, hence the fan from Deepdale or Old Trafford, why not support the Reds and be cool at school, seems to be the creed. But that has led to a lack of atmosphere at many of the smaller grounds, a fact backed up by a survey in next month's *FourFourTwo* magazine, in which 91 per cent of fans said the atmosphere at grounds wasn't as good as it used to be in the lower divisions.

There does seem to be a tendency to bemoan the lack of a family atmosphere, rather than to adopt a price structure to attract one. But at least some clubs are trying. Leyton Orient, for example, are charging under-16s just £10 for a season

ticket (that's 43p per match), while at Wycombe under-16s pay just £35. And bobbie hats off to Bristol City, who have given every adult buying a season ticket in the family stand at Ashton Gate a free season ticket for fans aged 12 and under.

But none of these clubs can hope to compete on the marketing front with clubs such as United (who have enough junior members - 34,156 - to fill over half of Old Trafford) and Spurs. Their club shops stock everything from beakers to bibs and jumpers in the hope of catching them young (well, you wouldn't expect Alan Sugar to pass up a marketing opportunity, would you?).

The saving grace for the smaller clubs is a committed parent with enough money and sense to pass on good - and loyal - habits. Of course, what I haven't considered is that baby Blair could grow up hating football - although it's unlikely in a family where even the cat is called

Lev Yashin - or he rebellious enough to support local team OPR (at least he'd be supporting Rangers in some shape and form). So it's likely that baby Blair will end up being taken regularly to Upton Park - at least West Ham is one of the few Premiership clubs with a family atmosphere which reflects their sympathetic price structure - and so will be committed to a lifetime forever blowing bubbles.

Sometimes, however, not even dad has the pulling power to sway young loyalties. I recall one eight-year-old whose dad was a committed Grouper, but whose best pal supported Spurs. Since best pal was, at that time, on a pedestal, the boy ended up wearing blue and white instead of red and white. Dad wasn't best pleased, because dad was Liam Brady.

Olivia Blair is assistant editor of *FourFourTwo* magazine

Last Saturday was a red-letter day in the Blair household, since it was the first football game in the life of baby Blair. Nothing strange about that, you might think: I'm sure most people can recall their first game. Mine was with my dad in the 1970s. Portsmouth v Charlton at Fratton Park. Pompey hadn't won at home all season, but scraped a 1-0 victory, which I of course attributed to my being there.

So on Saturday I'm sure that Spurs beat Villa for the first time in six years because baby Blair was there, not because Gareth Southgate wasn't. It was a good omen for a first game (actually Wimbledon v Manchester United on the opening day of the season was the very first, but I didn't know baby Blair was there). You see, baby Blair is not actually due to arrive in this world until March, but such is the footballing rivalry in our household, he (or she) already has - football-wise, at least - a split personality.

That's because I support Spurs, but my other half, who is a Rangers fan, follows West Ham down south and is adamant that baby Blair will be registered as a Junior Hammer before he has time to breathe, let alone utter the word White, Hart or Lane. The other problem is that baby Blair will be the fifth generation in a family of dedicated Rangers fans and will doubtless be given a Super Ally teddy bear as a reminder of his heritage.

It would be a shame if he had to support Rangers from afar and survive on the meagre diet of Scottish football afforded by the English media (at least Gazza's given them a reason for covering the Scottish game, if not always for the right reasons). But in fact baby Blair would be no different to the thousands of kids who grow up idolising a big club situated hundreds of miles from their home town, and whose idea of supporting involves possessing the lat-

est replica top, subscribing to the club magazine and having a bedroom festooned with posters of the club's stars.

It's amazing how you can wander along any high street and see kids wearing Manchester United, Liverpool and Newcastle tops, along with the odd England number (although never the grey version), while tops representing the local side are as rare as a new signing at Spurs.

Ruth and Mark Allen are perfect examples of this demographic vagary. School playground codes these days dictate that it's just not hip to be seen wearing a Stockport or Hartlepool top when you can strut around in the latest offerings from the fat cats. So although Ruth and Mark, thanks to their dad, Richard, are lifelong Swindon fans - nine-year-old Mark has even replaced the Thunderbirds stickers above his bed with a collection featuring Steve McMahon, Mark Walters et al - at school, both nail their colours to a very different mast.

## Toon Army finds a new general

David Batty's head has been seen of late buried in a weighty tome described on the dust jacket as "a modern history of hideous crimes". The Newcastle United midfielder has a fascination for real-life horror. Perhaps it is just as well.

Each time he turned on his heels in Budapest on Tuesday night, he could see football's equivalent of a horror show unfolding before his eyes. Had it not been for Batty's calming influence, Newcastle's UEFA Cup challenge would probably have perished with their death-wish defending against Ferencvaros.

It was not simply that he steered a sinking ship with his combative play in Newcastle's midfield anchor role. Batty's typical Yorkshire ferocity has never done his talent true justice. He showed his creative prowess in Budapest by setting up Alan Shearer for his impressive equaliser.

Batty's form must surely be a source of some reassurance for Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle manager, as he ponders the case against a defence that was not so much at sixes and sevens as ones, twos, fives, 12s and 19s in that 3-2 defeat against the Hungarian champions. Indeed, if Shearer is the first name the Newcastle manager pencils on his team-sheet for tomorrow's visit of Manchester United, the defending champions, to St James' Park, Batty will be a close second.

Batty, in Keegan's estimation, "has been nothing short of sensational" since his transfer from Blackburn in February. Yet if the Newcastle manager had been swayed by the Toon Army, he would not have allowed the Yorkshireman close enough to St James' Park to put pen to paper. "I got shoals of mail saying that I shouldn't sign him because he wasn't good enough and we didn't need him," Keegan recalled.

Tomorrow afternoon, you

**Simon Turnbull on David Batty, whose defensive qualities will be much needed by Newcastle tomorrow**

would not find one local heading up the hill to Newcastle's ground who would confess to being anything other than batty about Batty - unless, of course, you came across the Georgie Judases, as they have come to be known, in the Northumberland branch of the Manchester United supporters' club.

**'I got mail saying I shouldn't sign him because he wasn't good enough and we didn't need him'**

Batty made his debut in the corresponding fixture last season and while it was Eric Cantona, a fellow graduate from Leeds' champion class of 1992, who struck the decisive blow that March night, the Newcastle new boy won over the doubters. In doing so, he won the man of the match award and has had countless more statues for company on the after-match drive back to the Wetherby home he shares with his wife, Mandy, and their toddler twins, George and Jack. "He is the best signing Kevin Keegan's made," Barry Venison, one of Batty's predecessors in Newcastle's defensive midfield slot, said on a return visit to Tyneside this week. Certainly, the £3.5m acquisition of Batty must undoubtedly rank as one of the Newcastle manager's smartest deals.

He cost £500,000 less than Warren Barton and less than half the price of Faustino Asprilla. At 27, he is at the peak of his playing powers and, having been picked in Glenn Hoddle's squad for the Moldova game, is back in the England picture again.

Yet in the 51 weeks he spent out of action from April 1994 to April 1995, Batty feared his career would be ended by a split bone in the side of his right ankle that screws failed to mend. It was only the last resort of removing the bone, after six months in plaster, that solved a seemingly incurable problem.

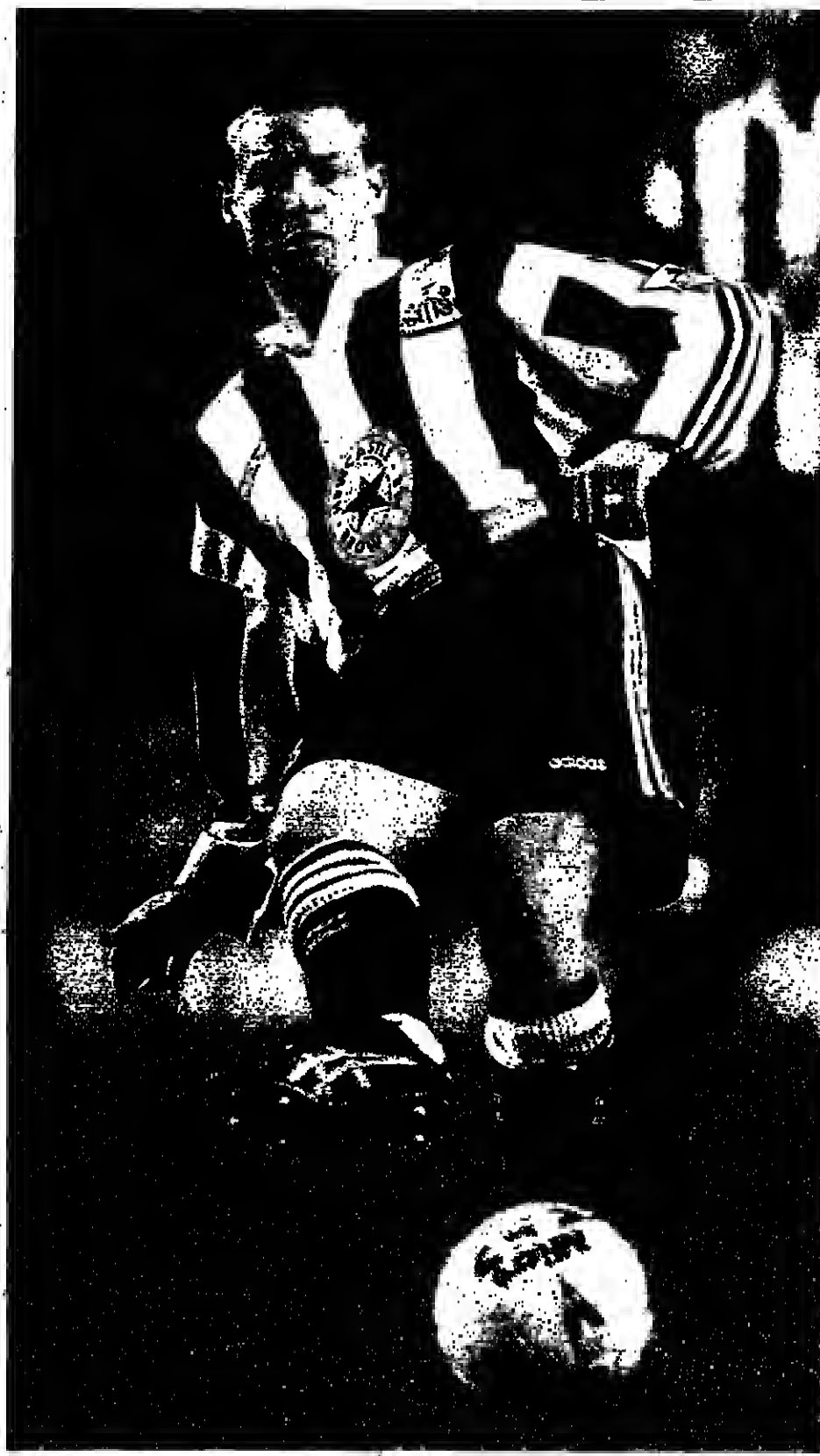
"That was the worst period of my life," Batty said. "I really thought my playing days might be at an end."

Such a close shave perhaps explains why Batty has been playing with renewed relish since he left Blackburn, where his Moscow tilt with Graeme Le Saux and Ray Harford's signing of Lars Bohinen threatened to stifle the promising comeback he made at the end of Rovers' 1994/95 championship-winning campaign.

It was Kenny Dalglish, Keegan's successor in the Liverpool No 7 shirt, who took Batty to Ewood Park in 1993. Dalglish never forgot the 18-year-old who played alongside him in an Elland Road testimonial match for John Charles and Bobby Collins.

But the manager who moulded Batty, and who he cites as the greatest influence on his career, was the man who caused Keegan to lose his shirt, as well as his rag, in the famously uncharitable 1974 Charity Shield match at Wembley. "I knew he was a diamond the first time I saw him play for Leeds City Boys," Billy Bremner said.

Come tomorrow, Keegan will doubtless be grateful for his polished gem as he plots how to get his hands on the crowning jewel in the Old Trafford trophy cabinet.



David Batty has proved the Newcastle doubters wrong

Photograph: Empics

## Swiss praise for Liverpool tactics

Roy Evans resumes his domestic duties tomorrow with a Merseyside derby, secure in the knowledge that Liverpool have regained their high standing in Europe.

A place in the quarter-finals of the Cup-Winners' Cup in March now looks likely following their 2-1 victory against Sion. The result in this second-round first-leg game was just the boost Evans and his players needed before tomorrow's game with Everton at Anfield. The way they went about securing that victory on Thursday night was loudly applauded in

Switzerland, while Evans himself called his team's approach "professional".

Robbie Fowler and John Barnes got the goals after Christophe Bonvin had given Sion a surprise early lead.

Alberto Bigon, the Sion coach, said Liverpool deserved their victory and that his club now seem resigned to going out of the competition.

Swiss journalists and broadcasters also praised Evans for his forward-thinking tactics. Patrick Herr of *Sport Zurich* said: "When Liverpool equalised, many people thought they

would settle for a draw. But it was obviously not in their thinking and that started a lot of people here.

"They are not used to seeing a visiting side play such an offensive game and it was very thrilling to watch. It made for a very special game and I know the people of Sion were honoured to see such a performance."

John Barnes never gave the ball away, but most of the papers here say Steve McMahon was the outstanding player. "He has marvellous skill and I don't think the Sion defend-

ers have faced a player like that before, one who runs straight at them."

Despite praising his team, Evans was unhappy at the way his team defended for long spells and has the option of recalling Neil Ruddock against Everton.

John Scales, who was continually pulled out of position in Switzerland, could find his place under threat. Evans will also want to assess the fitness of Fowler, who managed to play for 68 minutes after missing three matches because of an ankle injury.

Dave Watson could return to the Everton defence for the first time since the opening day of the season. He came through an A-team game this week behind closed doors without any problems after suffering a combination of knee and groin injuries.

Everton have come in for much criticism since their opening-day victory over Newcastle and they aim to use that to their advantage. Joe Royle, the Everton manager, said: "Nothing unites a team more than criticism of this kind. We are not going to Anfield just to make up the numbers."

## McGoldrick moves to Maine Road

Nationwide round-up

Eddie McGoldrick takes his place in Manchester City's otherwise unchanged squad for their home game against Norwich after Steve Coppell paid Arsenal £300,000 yesterday to make his loan move permanent. In-form Norwich City, who, in second, are 17 places above their hosts, welcome back Andy Johnson, who missed Wednesday's 2-0 defeat of Oldham. That was the Canaries' third successive victory, but they have won only once in their last 20 visits to Maine Road.

For their visit to Charlton, the leaders Bolton retain the side that beat Tranmere, but the home side are hoping that Anthony Barnes recovers from an ankle injury. Ricky Otto will be making his final appearance on loan from Birmingham.

There is no change either for Crystal Palace as they welcome Swindon to Selhurst Park. Their captain, Ray Houghton, is still out with a calf strain and George Ndah is absent with a thigh injury.

Swindon's midfielder Scott Leitch is expected to recover from his groin strain, which has restricted his training as the Robins seek their first win at Selhurst Park since the 1955/56 season.

Bradford City hope to receive clearance to play the Portuguese midfielder Humberto, who has joined his compatriot Sergio Pinto at Valley Parade, against Barnsley, who have Clint Marcell back in contention after a month out with a calf injury.

## FAN'S EYE VIEW

By Colin Campbell

You can see them every Saturday in the streets of Paisley, especially around popular pubs: single-decker buses loaded with either blue, red and white clad Rangers die-hards or green and white decked Celtic fans.

The buses trundle off, weighed down with those who have made the easy decision to support one or other of the Glasgow giants, both of which are based within 10 miles of Paisley town centre.

Consequently, St Mirren, the local senior team for around 200,000 people, find themselves bereft of the support that would relieve the club's current financial difficulties. Despite its geographical proximity, it is not only the Paisley Saints who are frustrated by this weekly exodus of cash-paying supporters. Every town in Scotland contributes to the attendances at Ibrox and Parkhead, each of which now attract over 50,000.

St Mirren, however, seem to be suffering more than most and the enormity of the over-craft means that a swift return to the richer pickings at the big boys' table is becoming increasingly less likely.

The current cash crisis can be traced back to their Scottish Cup triumph in 1987. On the foundation of that success, the then board decided that the time was right to assemble a team capable of sustaining a long-term challenge in the top half of the Premier Division. The manager, Tony Fitzpatrick, was allocated a budget - frankly beyond their means - to recruit the required players. Of course, they flopped, performances deteriorated and relegation followed.

Ironically, Fitzpatrick's popularity with the fans remained intact throughout. Yes, the signings were hopeless but, as they were being made, with the possible exception of a mercenary Steve Archibald, the fans were rubbing their hands and saying: "Great, these are the boys for us!"

The Love Street manager's office has had various recent occupants, but now Tony Fitzpatrick, with his enthusiasm still on the boil, has landed back in the hot seat. The fans smiled

and nodded when he publicly reminisced about a game in Aberdeen towards the end of his first spell in charge. The rampant Dons had just whipped us 5-0 and, as he made the longish walk from the Pictorial dug-out along the track to the tunnel, he was not even all that surprised to find that a sizeable contingent of the Saints fans had stayed to cheer and chant his name. Like the playing kit, everything is black or white with the Paisley support: you're either a hero or a villain.

Our expectations are slightly different now in the austere 90s. The hoped-for swift bounce back to the top flight never materialised, and the current shoe-string budget is restricting our short-term ambitions. It would be nice to enjoy the novelty of a season in which we do not have to worry about further demotion.

Long term? It comes and goes in cycles for teams like St Mirren. They had 13 consecutive seasons in the Premier and qualified for Europe four times in the 80s. They are in the realms of underachievement at the moment, but the cycle dictates an inevitable rise again at some point.

Of course, it would be better if the Old Firm supporting hordes backed the local team instead. But that is a fantasy we can forget. Professional sport is, by definition, a business and, like any other business, a professional football club, ultimately, is selling a product to a customer.

The product sold by Rangers and Celtic is, at a fundamental level, different from that sold by Scottish provincial clubs. The Glasgow giants are selling an association with success, their customers are not going to tolerate a side incapable of challenging for - and winning - domestic silverware on an ongoing season to season basis.

The others are selling the cosy glow of satisfaction that goes with supporting the local mob. And although things might be rotten just now, if we stick with it long enough, there is a glory day somewhere in the future - and the longer we have to wait, the sweeter it is going to be when we see it.

## PLAYER TRANSFERS

FROM 23 OCTOBER



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## SPORT

## 'I FIND CRITICISM HARD TO UNDERSTAND'

Joe Royle talks to Glenn Moore about the problems at Everton

## Els extends unbeaten record in World Match Play after remarkable comeback



All eyes were on Steve Stricker on Wentworth's fourth hole during yesterday's afternoon round of his match against Ernie Els. At one stage the American was six up but he lost on the last

Photograph: David Ashdown

## Players vote for strike over TV money

## Football

ALAN NIXON AND PHIL SHAW

England's footballers have voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action and are likely to withdraw their labour for the first time in their history a fortnight today.

The strike action will affect the three divisions below the Premiership, and is the result of a protracted battle between the Football League - which administers the three divisions of the Nationwide League - and the players' union over the distribution of television money.

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, had called on his members to endorse strike action in a ballot carried out in the last month. He will today announce a 92 per cent backing for a strike.

When Taylor announces his

plans he will almost certainly instruct his members in the First, Second and Third Divisions not to play in any game at which TV cameras are present, either for live coverage or recorded highlights, starting on Saturday 2 November. With all First Division games, and many in the Second and Third, now having cameras present to provide Sky Sports with its extensive coverage, the instruction is likely to affect the majority of matches in the three divisions.

Taylor is prepared to persevere with the strike despite threats from the Football League that it could have long-term consequences. The action will not affect Premiership matches.

At issue is the portion of the television money which has traditionally been paid to the PFA and used to pay for pensions and other benefits. Last minute talks have been lined up

between the two parties. Chris Hill, the Football League spokesman, said last night: "We hope for developments over the weekend. We have always stressed that we want to continue our dialogue. Hopefully the PFA will come round to that way of thinking."

The only previous occasion

on which England's professionals came close to withdrawing their labour in the 1960/61 season when they sought the lifting of the Football League's maximum wage of £20 per week.

Port Vale's First Division fixture at Wolverhampton today could be their last in the

Football League, the club's chairman, Bill Bell, warned yesterday.

Bell, the car dealer who owns 80 per cent of Vale's shares, put the Potters club and all their players up for sale following protests against him after Wednesday's home defeat by Crystal Palace. He said: "At the

moment there is no one coming forward to buy the club. If no one comes in during the next seven days, I would think Port Vale will not remain as a football club."

During the night, a van owned by Bell was set alight by intruders at Vale Park and pushed on to the playing area.

Police said they could not rule out a link between the fire and the chairman's decision to sell the club.

Vale are understood to have debts of £800,000, but have risen from the former Fourth Division and more than doubled their gates during Bell's decade at the helm.

Brighton's future is now looking even more uncertain after Portsmouth announced yesterday they will not allow the Seagulls to share their ground next season. Fratton Park has been the Third Division club's first choice for a temporary home ever since the Goldstone ground was sold last year.

Terry Gibson has left Barnet, only five days after being made first-team coach by the Third Division club, who this week appointed Alan Mullery as director of football.

Terry Bullivant, who became caretaker-manager after Roy Clemence's pre-season departure, resigned 24 hours before last Saturday's visit to Cardiff. Gibson, like Mullery and Clemence a former Tottenham player, took charge for that game, which Barnet won 2-1. He resigned after meeting the

Barnet chairman, Tiny Kleanthous, to discuss his role under Mullery.

Tottenham could be signing the 31-year-old Austrian international defender Anton Pfister. Although they have him under contract until 1998, Austria Vienna are prepared to let him go, at an undisclosed fee, if he can agree the move.

All perimeter fences at World Cup venues are to be pulled down in response to the stadium tragedy in Guatemala.

"Fences are for animals and prisoners - not football fans," Sepp Blatter, the general secretary of Fifa, football's world governing body, said yesterday. "I believe that all the fences for the World Cup in France should be taken down."

Fifa have asked that a minute's silence be observed at all football matches this weekend in memory of the more than 80 people who died in the disaster. At least 147 were also injured when fans tumbled down seats and stairs and were trapped by fencing at a World Cup qualifying match between Guatemala and Costa Rica on Wednesday.

## Rangers check Gascoigne's mental state

MARK BURTON

Rangers' manager, Walter Smith, will check on Paul Gascoigne's mental condition after his trying week before coming to face Aberdeen in the Scottish Premier Division today. Smith wants to be sure that the controversial England midfielder, who was sent off in the Champions' League game

against Ajax and is also facing allegations that he hit his wife, is in the right state of mind to help Rangers' pursuit of a morale-boosting League victory. Before heading off for the defeat in Amsterdam, Rangers were beaten in the League at Hibernian.

"I've had a word with him and he seems all right just now," said Smith, after Gascoigne had trained with the rest of the squad at Ibrox yesterday.

"I will leave the decision until nearer the game. Your first priority is to field a team you think is going to win the game."

Concern about Gascoigne goes beyond the club into the international arena. The England coach, Glenn Hoddle, will also want to be sure that the Scotland keeper can keep himself in the right frame of mind for World Cup qualifying matches. Smith's problems do not in-

volve Gascoigne alone. His goalkeeper, Andy Goram, is ruled out of the Aberdeen match, as are McColl, Durie, Anderson and McColl.

Smith wants to avoid a repetition of what happened in August 1994, the last time Rangers lost three times in succession. AER, Athens knocked them out of Europe. Celtic beat them at Ibrox, and Falkirk put them out of the Coca-Cola Cup.

## Keegan's fate bound up with United

You could forgive Kevin Keegan for feeling that the fate of his Newcastle management is inextricably linked with Manchester United.

Last season, his team were denied the championship by a late charge by Alex Ferguson's team and, now that they have regained the lead in the Premiership for the first time since March, who do they meet?

Like Holmes and Moriarty, Keegan and Ferguson have been pitting their wits since Newcastle were promoted in 1993 and it is the Manchester United manager who usually comes out on top.

Six league matches, no wins; if Newcastle's players and supporters have a *hate note*, it is un-

doubtedly clothed in a red shirt. The teams meet tomorrow at St James' Park, the scene of the pivotal - and snapshot - moment of last season. The home team, their attack rampant, dominated for the first half. When the goal did not come, they faded quietly away. The winner was snatched by Eric Cantona.

The faces in the crowd that cold March night said everything as, for the first time, it dawned on Tyneside that Keegan's team might not win the championship. Tears were shed and within three weeks the leadership of the Premiership was lost. A grudge has been nurtured ever since.

"The Manchester United game is one we want to win,"

## Guy Hodgson previews the weekend's Premiership action, which culminates tomorrow with more than pride at stake

Peter Beardsley said this week, "but I wouldn't say that it is more important than beating Coventry or West Ham." Oh yes? Try telling that to the Newcastle supporters, or Keegan, for that matter, who had his players training behind closed doors yesterday in preparation.

Newcastle need to win, if only for the self-belief it would stoke on Tyneside, while the visitors are desperate not to lose and fall five points behind a team they regard as one of their most dangerous rivals. "We can't afford

to let a gap develop," Ferguson said yesterday, echoing the words of last week before his side paid Liverpool back with a 1-0 win.

Then Ferguson had a Champions' League tie on the agenda immediately afterwards. It was with a sense of relief he could concentrate on Newcastle in isolation. "I don't have to worry about injuries," he said. That news will go down like a punctured balloon in Swindon, who travel to Old Trafford on Wednesday for a Coca-Cola Cup tie.

Roy Keane is pencilled in for that one, although there was just a hint yesterday he might turn up at St James' Park in playing gear. He is travelling to Newcastle ostensibly because Ferguson wants to gauge the Republic of Ireland midfielder player's fitness, but if the impression is favourable it is going to take steady resistance to temptation on the manager's part not to include him, at least on the bench.

Just as Newcastle have flourished against Manchester United, Liverpool have had a fruitless time against Everton since Joe Royle was appointed manager at Goodison Park. They meet at Anfield an hour before the kick-off at St James' Park, with the bookmakers making the home team favourites, if only because of a law of averages.

In Merseyside derbies of recent vintage, Everton have, shall we say, been more robust than their neighbours to an extent that the Liverpool manager, Roy Evans, made some disparaging comments about the Goodison club being called the school of science after one defeat. Whether this will be the case tomorrow is debatable, however, as two of Royle's

snappers in midfield, John Ebbrell and Joe Parkinson, are extremely doubtful.

This is unlikely to make Royle, who has been upset at recent reviews, any happier. "To be honest, everyone feels a bit aggrieved at some of the flak flying around," he said yesterday. "After all, we've taken seven points from our last nine and are lying only four points off a European place."

A win over the old enemy and all criticism will be forgotten. However, that is unlikely to be the case if Wimbledon lead the Premiership come tonight. The end of the world was all but predicted when the Dons won the FA Cup but, if results go in their favour today, the Crazy Gang will be perched on top of the league, albeit for 24 hours.

For that to happen will require Arsenal losing at home to Coventry and Wimbledon winning away at Chelsea, but after a club record six successive victories, the feeling around Selhurst Park is that anything is possible. "All the lads are buzzing," Brian McAllister, the Dons' defender, said, as indeed will be the headline writers. But, somehow, football will probably survive...

## RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE UNITED

DEFENCE	7/10	DEFENCE	8/10
Kevin Keegan seems to have a policy of - if they get two, we'll get three - which makes the well-known Liverpool manager, Roy Evans, made some disparaging comments about the Goodison club being called the school of science after one defeat. Whether this will be the case tomorrow is debatable, however, as two of Royle's		Phil Neville's return brings an end to a run of four consecutive defeats at full-back.	
MIDFIELD	7/10	MIDFIELD	8/10
Wendie's going forward, not so good on set pieces. But he's a good player, supposed to sort out the "over to you" Philippe's school of making, but there is little evidence of a change in attitude. Still, he's a good player and can do some wonderful things with the ball. He is a bit of a freekick specialist.		Still missing Wayne and you wonder how much for his goals but with the return of his play for one as inexperienced. He's a good player, supposed to sort out the "over to you" Philippe's school of making, but there is little evidence of a change in attitude. Still, he's a good player and can do some wonderful things with the ball. He is a bit of a freekick specialist.	
FORWARDS	10/10	FORWARDS	9/10
They paid a small fortune to get a good forward. Get the ball to them in the right positions and they will score goals. You cannot ask for more.		Slater continues to astonish, not so much for his goals but with the return of his play for one as inexperienced. He's a good player, supposed to sort out the "over to you" Philippe's school of making, but there is little evidence of a change in attitude. Still, he's a good player and can do some wonderful things with the ball. He is a bit of a freekick specialist.	

**LIGHTNING QUICK**

On each line place a letter which, when substituted for the last letter of the word to the left and the first letter of the word to the right, will give two other words. The six letters used will give another word reading downwards.

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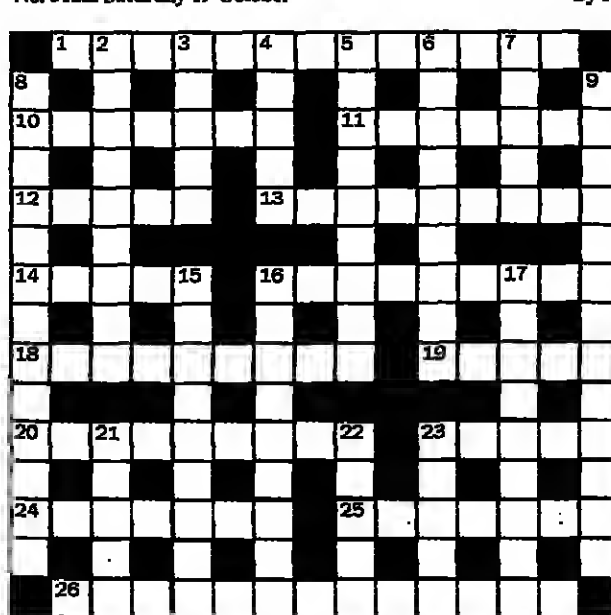
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## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

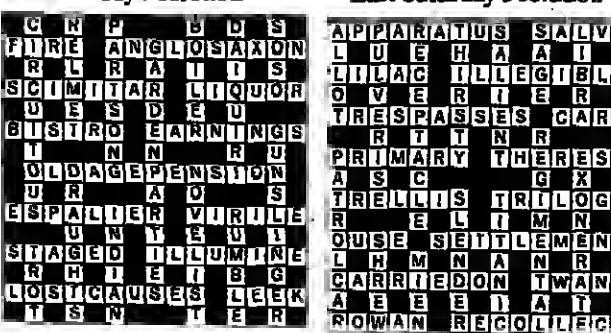
No. 3122, Saturday 19 October

By Phil



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



## ACROSS

- 1 It's a big let-down for an aviator (9,4)
- 10 Where one lives shows a little in choice of headgear (7)
- 11 Officer in filmsy refuge (7)
- 12 Artist appointed to frame King and Queen (5)
- 13 Cheers up unexpectedly after student's interred in tomb (9)
- 14 Examine church for climbing plant (5)
- 15 A gala menu served up for dance in Madrid (9)
- 18 Illumination in street reveals mostly unconvincing situation (9)
- 19 The way animal recoils, attacked by wasp (5)
- 20 Tear cover badly and go spare! (9)
- 23 Wine? There's zero in bar (5)
- 24 Religious leader stands in middle of road, rationally predicting the consequences (1,6)
- 25 One mother leaving nothing out, taking pictures (7)
- 26 My changes have plenty of time (6,7)

## DOWN

- 2 Steel back, hiding amid mature flourishing trees (9)
- 3 Performer's agent blowing top (5)
- 4 Dislikes a hint of eccentricity in headgear (5)
- 5 The first to take a spin in cricket match - plan's to have one caught (4,5)
- 6 Tommy Atkins on Citty Street! (3,6)
- 7 Score the same as a striker? (5)
- 8 Disastrous consequences somehow had yet to ensue cruel leader (3,5,2,3)
- 9 The way animal recoils, attacked by wasp (5)
- 15 Shortened term at Oxford is restricting the University there - that's laughable (6)
- 16 Quantity of Russian jets flying to another country? (9)
- 17 Due to be freed, prisoner ignores page of teaching material (9)
- 21 Mistake cropping up in answer or reply (5)
- 22 One's caught by the force? (5)
- 23 Guru floated over one (5)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive handbacked copies of *Answers and winners' names* will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, E.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: D.L. Smith, Edinburgh; Peter Browning, Bristol; Arthur Hall, Gillingham; A. Sargent, Bingley; A. Layton, Stroud.

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